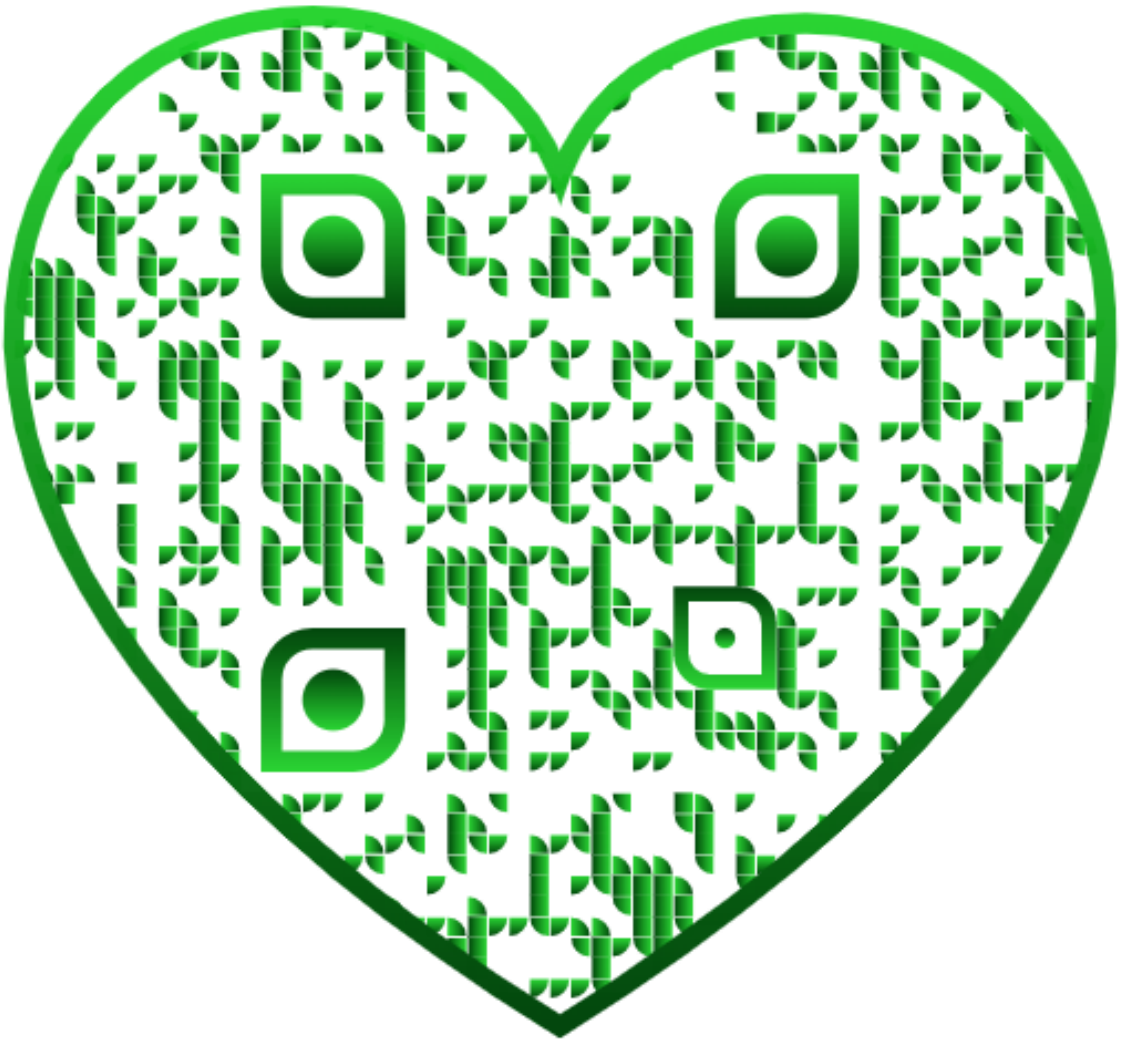
WHO IS WHO IN
hindu mythology

A COMPREHENSIVE COLLECTION OF STORIES FROM THE PURĀṆAS

VOL 1

Surya N. Maruvada



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Foreword

Sanātana Dharma (popularly known as the *Hindu* philosophy) has a rich repertoire of sacred texts which have been transmitted from generation to generation by oral tradition. The corpus comprises *Śruṭis*, *Smṛṭis*, *Purāṇās* and *Itihāsas*. While the *Śruṭis* are the original fonts of revealed wisdom, the other three are highly interlinked—or *hyperlinked* with allusions to concepts, definitions and events from others providing the context. Quite often, in order to understand the concepts and contexts of the events described in one or the other of them, it is necessary to follow the *hyperlinks* to other sources including the *Śruṭis*.

The rendition of the *Vēdās* requires not only rigid conformity to the texts but specified musical intonation of the hymns. It is for this reason that they survive till date in their original form without any variation. On the other hand the *Itihāsas*—literally recorded happenings—and celebrated in popular culture in prose and poetry; songs and ballads have been subjected to many improvisations and interpolations to suit various modes and literary forms. The improvisations and interpolations reflect the creative genius of their writers and the changing cultural mores of the epochs in which they were written. They also underscore the tolerance of freedom of expression that *Sanātana Dharma*

accorded its practitioners. There are two original narratives of the *Itihāsa*, *Rāmāyaṇa*, the one written by Sage *Vālmiki* and the *Ādhyātma Rāmāyaṇa* written by Sage *Vēda Vyāsa*. Additionally there are about three hundred versions of the great *Itihāsa* written in many Indian languages, in each of which their composers may be said to have exercised poetic licence. The *Itihāsa*, *Mahābhārata* has been told and retold in many Indian languages. Similarly the commentaries and translations of the *Purāṇās* into Indian languages vary in their details. In the resultant melee the ordinary student is lost, being unable to understand whether a narrative is from the original source or an interpolation.

It is in this context the present *Encyclopaedia* assumes significance. The author Surya N. Maruvada used the *Telugu* translations of the *Purāṇās* as the basis to write it. His intimate knowledge of *Saṃskṛtam* and the original texts stands him in good stead in nuancing the commentary. One hopes that the *Encyclopaedia* will be useful not only for the world–wide Indian diaspora to obtain gleanings from their spiritual heritage but other scholars desirous of understanding the rich spiritual and philosophical underpinnings of *Sanātana Dharma*.

– Narayanadas Upadhyayula

Introduction

The purpose of this book is to make available all the stories and personalities in the Hindu Purāṇās in a compact package to those with an interest but no access to the Purāṇās in the original Sanskrit or in Telugu translations. Also, even if one had access to the original books, there are so many that finding all the stories about, say, Lord Ṣiva would require reading parts of almost a dozen Purāṇas. Video series on the Purāṇās had become available in recent decades of such classics as the Rāmāyaṇa, Mahā Bhārata, Om Namah Ṣivāya etc. By the nature of television series, much material that was not in the original Purāṇās was added to increase the number of episodes and to create greater interest. Having read the major ones in Sanskrit or in translations by great Telugu poets in my student days, I was aware of the inflation of the content. Sometimes though, it was not obvious whether a particular sub-story was original or a creative addition for TV. As it happened, I had a Telugu book titled "Pūrva Gāthā Lahari" by Mr. Vemuri Srinivasa Rao (1952) which contained reasonably detailed stories about almost every character in the Purāṇās and stories about a specific place of pilgrimage or a temple, as well as a selection of Upanishads. I would look up a story in this book and tell my wife and children whether the story was in the original or was a TV

writer's addition. My daughter, whom we brought to the US when she was about 2 years old, was very interested in the stories but never learned to read our mother tongue. She planted the idea in my head that an English book with the same content as Pūrva Gāthā Lahari would be useful, not only for Indians growing up outside India but even many in India who for various reasons including lack of time, could not read these masterpieces in Sanskrit or their mother tongue.

Looking around in 2011, I found a monumental work of over 900 large size pages, appropriately titled "Purāṇic Encyclopedia" by Mr. Vettam Mani, primarily intended for use as a Reference work by scholars. After writing to the publisher of Pūrva Gāthā Lahari and not receiving a response, I decided to write the present book, not as a word-for-word translation but as a rendering into contemporary idiomatic English. The Purāṇas, especially translations into other Indian languages, vary in the details. For this work, the stories as they appear in the Telugu versions are used.

Sanskrit and Telugu, similar to most other major Indian languages, are phonetic, meaning each character whether a single letter or a combination of letters, is a syllable. Also, there are many sounds in these two languages that are not available in English. I have listed in the Table of Alphabet Comparison below the 52 letters of the Telugu 'alphabet' and 48 letters in Sanskrit. There are a handful of letters in both languages that have not been in usage for some time that I chose not to include. During the last three or four centuries, scholars writing Sanskrit names in English have adopted 'Diacritical Marks' found under Latin Extended fonts

(such as Ṣ and ṇ) to represent some sounds not used in English. In the present work, the Diacritical marks are used as shown in the Table.

The first sixteen characters listed in the Table are vowels, the rest are consonants. The 'alphabetic' sequence of both Sanskrit and Telugu is as depicted in the Table going from top to bottom and left to right. The present book arranges the names of Purāṇic characters in regular alphabetical sequence. All Sanskrit words, not just names, are written with initial capitalization. Certain concepts unique to the time (generally considered to be 2,000 BC to ~ 500 AD) and place (the Indian subcontinent, mostly the northern part, and the island of Sri Lanka) are explained in parenthetical notes. A list of the more complex of such concepts are listed in the Explanation of Frequently Used Terms in the Appendix for convenience and ready reference. When any of these terms occurs in a story, the first occurrence is marked with an asterisk *.

In this book, it is not unusual for the same name being used for male and female persons – while they are identical when written phonetically in English, they are generally identifiable as male or female due to different word-endings based on gender in Sanskrit and some other Indian languages.

The British spelling is used in this book for words spelt differently between British and American English. Examples are colour, flavour, behaviour, harbour, honour, humour, labour, neighbour, rumour and splendour, all of which are spelt without a u in American English. Another group of words, ending in -re in British English, such as centre, fibre, sombre and theatre end in -er in American English. Words ending in -ise in British English end in

-ize in American English. The above examples are cited because these are the groups of words most likely to occur in a book of this genre.

Given the millennia-long time periods over which the stories described in this book would have occurred, it is not surprising that more than one character has the same name. Roman numerals have been assigned to distinguish these different identities. The purpose was only to differentiate between individuals with the same name. The modern western convention that John Smith III is a descendant of John Smith I does not apply. The Roman numeral assigned was based on the most likely time period during which each character with the same name had lived. Sometimes the temporal sequence is clear, i.e., a character appearing in the *Rāmāyaṇa* would be designated I if the other character is from the *Mahābhārata*. In many cases the sequence will not be so clear. In such situations, the author used factors such as with whom each of them had shared events and used his judgment in assigning the Roman numerals.

Table of Alphabet Comparison

Telugu	Sanskrit	English Equivalent	Telugu	Sanskrit	English Equivalent
అ	अ	a, like u in 'cup', 'but'	ట	ट	ṭ, like t in 'take'
ఆ	आ	ā, (long), as a in 'father'	ఠ	ठ	ṭh, like 'th' in 'anthill'
ఇ	इ	i, like I in 'sit' or 'bit'	డ	ड	ḍ, like d in 'dog'
ఈ	ई	ī, (long) like 'ee' in 'keep' or 'tweet'	ఢ	ढ	ḍh, like 'dh' in 'adhere'
ఉ	उ	u, like u in 'put'	ణ	ण	ṇ, unique to Indian languages
ఊ	ऊ	ū, like u in 'rude'	త	त	t, like 'th' in 'pith'
ఎ		e, like e in 'get'	థ	थ	th, like 'th' in 'think'
ఏ	ए	e, (long) like a in 'gate'	ద	द	d, like 'th' in 'this'
ఐ	ऐ	ai, like ai in 'aisle'	ధ	ध	dh, unique to Indian languages
ఒ		o, shorter than o in 'go' or 'so'	న	न	n, like n in 'nut'
ఓ	ओ	ō, (long) like o in 'whole'	ప	प	p, like p in 'pup'
ఔ	औ	au, like 'ou' in 'pound'	ఫ	फ	ph, like 'ph' in 'shepherd'
ఋు	ऋ	ṛ, generally written as ri; 'Kṛshṇa', in lieu of 'Krishṇa'	బ	ब	b, like b in 'bug'
ఋూ	ॠ	ṛū, not used	భ	भ	bh, like 'bh' in 'abhor'
అం		am, unique to Indian languages	మ	म	m, like m in 'map'
అః		ah, unique to Sanskrit	య	य	y, like y in 'yet'
క	क	k, like k in 'kind'	ర	र	r, like r in 'red'
ఖ	ख	kh, like kh in 'bunkhouse'	ల	ल	l, like l in 'let'
గ	ग	g, like g in 'get'	వ	व	v, like v in 'van'
ఘ	घ	gh, like 'gh' in 'ghost'	శ	श	ś, unique to Indian languages
ఙ	ङ	ng, unique to Indian languages	ష	ष	sh, like 'sh' in 'ship'
చ	च	ch, like 'ch' in 'church'	స	स	s, like s in 'set'
ఛ	छ	chh, like 'ch' in 'change'	హ	ह	h, like h in 'hut'
జ	ज	j, like j in 'judge'	ళ	ळ	ḷa, unique to Indian languages
ఝ	झ	jh, unique to Indian languages	క్ష	क्ष	ksh, as spelled
ఞ	ञ	ña, unique to Indian languages	ఱ		~r, unique to Indian languages

Unique Aspects of Hindu Mythology

While most of the major works from which the stories in the book are extracted have become available in English translations, they are massive enough that a lifetime is not enough to read all of them. If one is interested primarily in the lives of the characters in the Purāṇas, this translation is a compact and comprehensive source. The depiction of many of the characters in the Purāṇas, especially considering the age of these ancient books, is extremely sophisticated. One does not have to be a Hindu to enjoy and appreciate the stories. Neither this book itself nor the following exposition of some distinctive features of the stories in it, is intended to promote the Vēdic religion generally known as Hinduism. The purpose is only to make these interesting stories available and intelligible to a wider audience than those who know the Telugu language.

All ancient cultures have produced religious texts and mythologies full of great kings, warriors, magical creatures, monsters and Gods. However, some concepts found only in Hindu mythology are unique and ahead of their time, considering the books were composed 2000+ years ago.

- The sequence of incarnations of Vishṇu, the preserver in the Hindu Trinity, is: fish, tortoise, boar, hybrid man-lion, and the

rest human. Science has established the stages of evolution of life forms only about two hundred years ago.

- On the world where Brahma, the creator in the Hindu Trinity resides, the length of a day is equivalent to many years on earth. While the huge difference may be a stretch, the concept of a different time scale on different worlds was not known until a few hundred years ago.
- Secret Mantras were used to deploy or rescind powerful weapons. These secret Mantras were zealously guarded by those to whom they were taught and would not be taught to someone, always by word of mouth, until the Guru was absolutely certain that the disciple would not abuse or misuse the weapons.
- The concept of controlling the flow of a river was depicted in works preceding the times of Rāma. A king of the solar dynasty and ancestor of Rāma was advised that he must bring the waters of the heavenly river Ganga to earth to wash away the sins of his ancestors by submerging their ashes. He first prayed to Ganga; she agreed to descend to the earth but was concerned that the force of her fall to earth and flow on earth could be destructive. The king then prayed to Ṣiva who assured him that He could contain Ganga in His matted hair and let her down at a controlled rate. It appears that the first dam and spillway were built to control the mighty river Ganga.
- Ṣiva appears to be the first environmental activist, followed by Vishṇu. Among the Asuras destroyed by Ṣiva were three brothers named Tripura, or ‘three cities’. Vishṇu took at least

two of his incarnations, Paraṣurāma and Kṛshṇa, to reduce the burden on Goddess Earth.

- The concept of a focused energy beam as a powerful weapon is depicted in the form of Ṣiva's third eye. When He is really angry, such as when Manmatha, the God of Love, shot one of his flower arrows at Him to make Him fall in love with Pārvati, Ṣiva opened His third eye and Manmatha was instantly incinerated. A powerful, 20-beam infrared neodymium glass laser built at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in 1977 for the study of inertial confinement fusion and long-scale-length laser-plasma interactions was named SHIVA for the Hindu God.
- When someone with spiritual power such as a divine being or a Sage, is 'thought of', that entity will be instantly aware not only that someone is thinking of them, but who and for what purpose – in other words, telepathic communication. Wherever this means of communication occurs in the text, 'thought of' (or 'thinks of') is marked with an asterisk *, similar to the Sanskrit words listed in the Appendix.

Even a mythological world follows rules, and it is useful to understand the basic themes that recur in many stories:

- Gods and evil demons called Asuras, whose progenitors were half-brothers, were locked in constant enmity towards each other, with their relative fortunes waxing and waning with the times and the circumstances.
- Spiritual power was conferred on those who performed Tapas. Usually translated as 'meditation', Tapas was much more; generally directed towards a specific Deity such as

Dēvi, the Supreme Being or one of the Trinity who, once propitiated, was bound to grant any boon the performer of the Tapas requests with the exception of immortality. The Asuras made skilled use of this principle to obtain boons from Brahma or Ṣiva which would make it very difficult for Vishṇu, their mortal enemy, to kill them.

- Even Vishṇu was not exempt from the consequences of His actions if He had to depart from the righteous path, or Dharma. He sometimes had to use deceit or choose the lesser of evils to kill a demon empowered by powerful boons. When that happened He would face retribution, generally during His next incarnation.
- The throne of a kingdom passed from father to eldest son automatically, but the king always had to rule with the consent of the governed. The king and his family not only had to be good but seen by all his subjects to be good.
- Everyone was responsible for the consequences of their actions. The principle of strict individual responsibility is illustrated by the following episode in the Mahā Bhārata: Drōṇa, the leader of the Kaurava army, was invincible even to Arjuna, aided by Kṛshṇa. Kṛshṇa suggests breaking Drōṇa's will to fight by making him believe his son Aṣvatthāma died in war, using an elephant by the same name on the battlefield, which was killed. Drōṇa doesn't believe the news at first so Kṛshṇa persuades Dharmarāja, famous for his absolute honesty, to repeat the announcement of Aṣvatthāma's death adding 'the elephant' under his breath. The ruse works and Drōṇa is eliminated. At the end of Mahā Bhārata, as

Dharmarāja accompanied by his four brothers and the wife they all shared, is on his way to heaven, he learns he must first spend some time in hell to pay for his sin of telling a lie, unless someone else takes the burden of the sin. When asked, each of his brothers and his wife, none of whom ever disobeyed him, tells him the same thing – "you told the lie, you suffer the consequences".

- There was a system of checks and balances embedded in the Hindu caste system. The princely caste, Kshatriyas, had control of the tax-funded treasury and the armed military. The restraint on their great power was that they were obligated to protect and support Brahmins, whose primary assets were spirituality, knowledge and wisdom. A king was required to keep the Brahmins in his land safe and happy and could not deny any request by a Brahmin, however unreasonable it might be. An extreme example is of a demon king, Vṛshaparva, whose daughter once upset the daughter of the king's Guru. The Guru decided to leave the king's city because his daughter vowed she would not stay there. The king had his daughter become the servant of the Guru's daughter as the only compromise to keep the Guru from leaving. It was believed that if the Brahmin Guru left under the circumstances, the kingdom would have suffered a long drought and famine.

– A –

Abhijitti – A star adjacent to Rōhiṇi. Daughter of Daksha Prajāpati* and one of the wives of Chandra (*the Moon God*). Wishing to become Chandra's favourite wife, she went to perform Tapas. Kumāraswāmi (son of Lord Ṣiva) gave her place in the sky to another star, Agni Daivatya. *Mahā Bhārata*

Abhimanyu I – Son of Chākshusha Manu*. *Matsya Purāṇa*

Abhimanyu II – Son of Subhadra (*sister of Lord Kṛshṇa*) and Arjuna. He did not accompany his father and uncles during their exile in the forest. Balarāma's daughter Ṣaṣirēkha was in love with him. He loved her as well, but Balarāma was intent on giving his daughter in marriage to Duryōdhana's son Lakshmaṇa. Ghaṭōtkacha (*son of Bhīma and Hiḍimbi; each of the Pānḍavas had at least one wife he did not share with his brothers, in addition to Draupadi, shared by all five*) abducted her and gave her in marriage to Abhimanyu. *Ṣaṣirēkha Pariṇayam*

After his father and uncles finished their incognito year (*the wager the Pānḍavas lost required them to spend twelve years of exile in the forest - Araṇyavāsa, and one year incognito – Agjnātavāsa. If they were exposed during that year, they had to repeat the whole twelve plus one year exile*), and defeated the Kauravas in the Gōgrahaṇa episode (*alerted by their spies that the*

Pānḍavas were in the court of King Virāṭa in disguise, Duryōdhana, with his army, attacked Virāṭa's kingdom and abducted his cattle, the kingdom's primary resource, expecting that the Pānḍavas would abandon their disguises and come out to aid the king, thereby being forced to repeat the entire thirteen year exile – the ruse failed only because of a miscalculation of the incognito duration by one day), Abhimanyu, accompanied by his mother, entered Virāṭa Nagara.

During the year the Pānḍavas were disguised, Arjuna (*whose disguise was as a eunuch named Bṛhannala, skilled in music and dance*) taught dance to Virāṭa's daughter Uttara and drove the chariot of Virāṭa's son Uttara and defeated the Kauravas. Desirous of establishing an alliance with the Pānḍavas, King Virāṭa sought to give his daughter to Arjuna in marriage. Arjuna suggested that she should instead become his son Abhimanyu's wife. King Virāṭa agreed and performed his daughter's marriage to Abhimanyu.

The Mahā Bhārata war began not long after Abhimanyu's marriage. Abhimanyu vigorously entered the centre of the battle, beating the enemy back even when stalwart fighters such as Duṣṣāsana, Vikarṇa and Chitrasēna attacked him together.

Drōṇa (*who was the Kaurava army's commander-in-chief after the fall of Bhīshma*) arranged his army in an intricate formation called Padma Vyūha*. Arjuna, who alone in the whole Pānḍava forces, knew how to break out of the Padma Vyūha, was fighting elsewhere on the battlefield at the time. Dharmarāja and Bhīma thought that somehow the Padma Vyūha could be broken before Arjuna returned from the other part of the battlefield. They asked Abhimanyu to enter the Padma Vyūha and break through it.

Abhimanyu explained to them that he knows how to enter the Padma Vyūha, but cannot break out of it. They told him not to be afraid and assured him that they and many other warriors would follow right behind him and prevent the Padma Vyūha from being closed up again. Abhimanyu entered the Padma Vyūha. Several great warriors among the Kauravas including Drōṇa, his brother-in-law Kṛpa, Drōṇa's son Aṣvatthāma, Kṛtavarma, Karṇa, and Duryōdhana all set upon the lone boy. He fought them all at the same time as if there were several clones of him. He kept shooting arrows at Drōṇa, Karṇa and Kṛtavarma. Duryōdhana's son Lakshmaṇa was killed by Abhimanyu's arrows. Duṣṣāsana (*Duryōdhana's younger brother and closest ally*) ran away. Vṛshasēna (*son of Karṇa*) fainted. Abhimanyu, undeterred by the forces aligned against him, kept raining arrows on the enemy. The Kaurava elders decided they had to kill Abhimanyu by deceit. Karṇa, attacking from behind, knocked him off his chariot. Kṛpa then killed his horses. Abhimanyu was then fighting mounted enemies while on foot. He fought alone like that for a long time. No one from the Pāṇḍava forces could come to his aid. Dhṛtarāshṭra's son-in-law Saindhava (*who had a boon that he can hold off all the Pāṇḍavas other than Arjuna for one day*) prevented Dharmarāja and the others from entering the Padma Vyūha to help Abhimanyu. Abhimanyu finally got very tired but was unable to break out of the Padma Vyūha and was killed by the Kaurava elders' arrows.

A son named Parīkshit was born to him and Uttara. In a previous birth, Abhimanyu was Varcha, son of a woman named Sōma. He was Chandra. The Dēvas requested Sōma to "lend" her son to

them to help them in one of their planned activities. She initially refused but they promised her that he would return soon and took him. *Mahā Bhārata*

Abhipratāri – A Muni. He was of the lineage of Kakshasēna. *Mahā Bhārata*

Acchōda – A lake. Mind-born daughter (*in the Purāṇas, rivers and other bodies of water are anthropomorphed into women*) of Sōmakas. She, never having seen her parents, wanted to see them. One day she saw a man named Amāvasu and his wife Adrika flying overhead on a flying vehicle. Mistaking them for her parents, she flew up to meet them. Because she sinned by acting improperly, she was about to fall to the ground. She prayed to her parents. They told her, "Do not be afraid. You will not fall to the ground. But you have to experience the result of your Karma. Since you mistook Amāvasu and Adrika for your parents, you will be born to Adrika. Born to a fish (*she was born as a fish due to a Ṣāpa* by Lord Brahma*), you will have sons by Sage Parāṣara and King Ṣantanu and return to heaven." She was reborn as Matsyagandhi (*also known as Satyavati*). *Brahma Purāṇa*

Adbhuta – Agni. Son of a fire named Āpa and his wife Mudita. *Mahā Bhārata*

Adhiratha I – Son of Chaitra and father of Suratha. *Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa*

Adhiratha II – Karṇa's foster father. He was of the Sūta caste (*chariot-drivers*). *Mahā Bhārata*

Adhishṭhāna Pura – Capital of country named Chēdi. *Bhāgavata*

Ādhūrtarajurajasa – Son of Kuṣa (*one of Lord Rāma's twin sons*). He ruled Dharmāraṇya. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Ādigadādhara – The first one to carry a mace, Lord Vishṇu himself. He took up a mace to immobilize an Asura* named Gaya. *Vāyu Purāṇa*

Aditi – Daughter of Daksha Prajāpati* and his wife Dharaṇi. She was one of the wives of Kaṣyapa Prajāpati, some of his other wives being Diti, Vinata, and Kadruva. The other wives were not blessed as she was. Her children were righteous Dēvas (*divine*). When Lord Vishṇu chooses to take an incarnation, He will be born to Aditi or her incarnation, not to Diti or any other of Kaṣyapa's wives.

Once, after completing his meditation, Kaṣyapa asked Aditi "is the worship of honoured guests and Dēvas being done as it should? ". Aditi informed him that they were not, due to harassment by the children of Diti. Kaṣyapa advised her to worship Lord Vishṇu. Kaṣyapa also taught her a Mantra called "Payōbhakshaṇa". Lord Vishṇu was pleased with her devotion, and appeared before her. She told Lord Vishṇu that the Asura* Emperor Bali occupied Indra* Lōka (*Swarga or heaven*) and requested Him to expel Bali from there. Lord Vishṇu asked her to faithfully serve her husband and that He would be born from her womb and would resolve her sons' difficulties. Lord Vishṇu himself was born to Aditi as Vāmana (*the fifth incarnation, the first as a human*).

Once, Diti was pregnant. Afraid that Diti will have a strong son who would be her enemy, Aditi summoned her son Indra and expressed her concern. Indra entered Diti's womb and cut her fetus

into pieces (See **Maruts**). Learning that what happened to her fetus was due to Aditi, Diti gave her a Ṣāpa* that she would be born on earth as a human. As a result, Aditi was born as Dēvaki (*mother of Lord Kṛshṇa*). *Dēvī Bhāgavata*

Once upon a time, Diti's sons (*Daityas or Asuras**) were harassing the Dēvas (*Aditi's sons*) by stealing the Havya*. Unhappy that her sons were starving, Aditi prayed to Sūrya (*the Sun God*). Sūrya was pleased and appeared before her. She requested that she should beget a son with Sūrya's attributes who could protect the Dēvas. One of Sūrya's rays, named Sushumna, entered Aditi's womb. Aditi was observing fasts even after she became pregnant. Kaṣyapa challenged her as to why she was fasting while pregnant and accused her of destroying the fetus in her womb. Aditi became angry and cast out the fetus from her womb. A boy was then born and was named Mārtānḍa. *Mārkanḍēya Purāṇa*

Aditi's sons were the twelve Ādityas. Once, she approached Kaṣyapa with the intention of making love and found Kaṣyapa with Kadruva. Upset, she gave them both a Ṣāpa that they will be born on earth. Kadruva countered with the same Ṣāpa on Aditi. As a result, Aditi was born as Dēvaki. *Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa*

Ādivarāha – Once upon a time, when the earth had sunk into the netherworld, Lord Vishṇu was trying to decide which form He was going to incarnate in to rescue the earth. He decided in favour of a Varāha (*boar*) and lifted the earth from the netherworld by His tusks. The incarnation (*third one, after Matsya – fish, and Kūrma – turtle*) came to be known as Ādivarāha. *Vishṇu Purāṇa*

Adrika – An Apsara*. Wife of Amāvasu. As she and her husband were flying in their flying vehicle, Acchōda, mistaking them for

the parents she never knew, flew up, and falling down, prayed to her parents. Since she mistook this couple for her parents, her ancestors (*she was the mind-born daughter of Sōmakas)* determined that she shall be reborn as their child. *Brahma Purāṇa*

Adrika once stepped on the foot of a Sage who gave her a Ṣāpa* that she shall take the form of a female fish. *Dēvī Bhāgavata*

As a result of the Ṣāpa, she became a fish and was in the Yamuna river. An eagle carrying the semen of Uparicharavasu to his wife Girika dropped it while flying over the Yamuna river. Adrika swallowed it and became pregnant. A boy named Matsya Rāja and a girl named Matsya Gandhi were born to her. She was free of the Ṣāpa afterward and returned to heaven. *Mahā Bhārata*

Adṛṣyanti – Wife of Sage Vasishṭha's son Ṣakti. While Adṛṣyanti was pregnant, an Asura* swallowed her husband. Her son was Sage Parāṣara (*father of Sage Vēda Vyāsa*). Her son asked her, "Why don't you have the accoutrements of a married woman? Where is my father?" She told him that his father was swallowed by an Asura. *Linga Purāṇa*

Agasti – A Sage. He taught the use of an archery weapon named Brahmaṣira to a Sage named Agnivēṣa. *Mahā Bhārata*

Agastya – A Sage. Once Sūrya (*the Sun God*) and Varuṇa (*the Rain God*), while travelling, saw the beautiful Apsara* Ūrvaṣi and both ejaculated spontaneously. Ūrvaṣi kept their semen in a Kumbha (*pot*). Agastya and Sage Vasishṭha were born from that pot. *Uttara Rāmāyaṇa*

Agastya remained a bachelor for a long time. One day, while walking in the forest, he saw people hanging upside down from

trees, and asked them why they were like that. They replied that they could not go to the afterlife due to the fact that a descendant of theirs named Agastya did not have any children. Realizing that they were his ancestors, Agastya decided to get married in order to help them go to heaven. Using Divya Dṛshṭi* acquired by his Tapas*, he learned that a daughter named Lōpāmudra was born to the king of Vidarbha. He went to the king and asked him for Lōpāmudra's hand in marriage. The king was reluctant to have his daughter marry someone who wears clothing made from vegetable fibres and eats roots and berries found in the forest, but Lōpāmudra came in and said she was willing to marry the Sage. The king performed her marriage to Agastya.

One day, Agastya was in a romantic mood and indicated to her that he would like to sleep with her. She agreed that as her husband, it was appropriate for him to desire her, but that she was wearing old clothes and she would agree to his wish only after he gave her nice clothes and ornaments to wear. Unwilling to spend some of the fruit of his Tapas to acquire the necessary wealth, he approached a king named Ṣrutaparva and asked for any wealth in excess of the king's needs. The king replied that he does not have excess wealth and suggested that they should go ask Pradhnaṣva, another king. Pradhnaṣva also said that he had only wealth sufficient for his needs. The three of them then went to another king, Trasadasya. He also had only just the wealth he needed. Having heard that another king named Ilvala was very wealthy, they went to him. Ilvala greeted them with respect and invited them to have dinner first. According to his practice, he had his shape-shifting brother Vātāpi turn into a lamb, had him cooked

and served as dinner for Agastya. (*briefly, the story was that Vātāpi and his brother had a grudge against Brahmins such as Agastya. Once a Brahmin guest ate Vātāpi, Ilvala would say "Come, Vātāpi" and Vātāpi would tear the Brahmin's stomach, which would kill the Brahmin, and come out.)* Realizing that Ilvala and his brother were killing Brahmins in this manner, Agastya rubbed his stomach and said, "Be digested, Vātāpi". Vātāpi was digested inside Agastya's stomach. Ilvala was sad when he realized that his brother was now really dead, but pretended not to know what had just happened. He asked Agastya and the kings who accompanied him the purpose of their visit, and gave them the money they sought. Agastya gave Lōpāmudra nice clothes and ornaments and enjoyed conjugal pleasures with her. They had a son named Dṛḍhasya and a grandson named Tējasvi (*also known as Idhmavāhu*).

Once upon a time, the Vindhya mountain (*in the Purāṇas, mountains are anthropomorphed into men*) grew to an enormous height and was blocking the path of the Sun and the Moon so that people could not tell day from night. Several Sages went to Vindhya and asked him to return to normal height, but Vindhya refused to listen to their pleas. The Sages then sought Agastya's help. Agastya went to Vindhya and requested Vindhya to let him pass on his way south by returning to his regular height. Vindhya complied and let Agastya pass. Agastya requested Vindhya to remain that way until he returns from his southern trip. Agastya never came that way again and Vindhya remained at his reduced height ever since.

Once upon a time, some Asuras* named Kālakēyas were

harassing Sages. Even Dēvas could not do anything because when Dēvas tried to attack them, the Kālakēyas would hide in the ocean. The Sages, unable to bear the suffering caused by the Kālakēyas, went to Agastya and requested him to drink all the ocean water. As Agastya honoured their request, the Kālakēyas were exposed and the Dēvas killed them. The Sages then asked Agastya to fill the ocean with water again. Agastya told them he digested the ocean water and could not return the water to the ocean. The ocean was later filled with water when King Bhagīratha (*an ancestor of Lord Rāma*) brought the heavenly river Ganga to earth.

Once, Agastya was performing intense Tapas* with his arms raised, on the banks of the Yamuna river. The Dēvas were performing a Yāga named Sattra on the banks of the Kuṣavati river and invited Kubēra (*the God of wealth*). Kubēra was going to the Yāga on his flying vehicle, accompanied by his friend Maṇimanta. Maṇimanta's spit fell on Agastya, of whose presence on the ground, Maṇimanta was unaware. Agastya gave Maṇimanta a Ṣāpa* that he would be killed by a human but that the Ṣāpa will be removed when Kubēra looks at him.

Once upon a time, Nahusha became Indra* (*it should be noted that many names such as Indra, Agni, etc., are actually positions which could be occupied by different individuals based on their qualifications and performance in the positions. Indra, in particular, is always concerned that any Sage could replace him by performing very intense Tapas*), and was extremely arrogant. One day, blind with arrogance, Nahusha commanded Agastya and other Sages to carry his palanquin. Offended by that insult and Nahusha's gross misdeeds, Agastya gave him a Ṣāpa that he would

become a serpent. *Mahā Bhārata*

Once upon a time, an Asura named Vṛtra, afraid of Indra, hid in the ocean. Indra was therefore unable to find him to kill him. Indra went and complained to Lord Brahma. Lord Brahma told Indra that he could not do anything and asked him to go to Agastya. Indra prayed to Agastya, who took the ocean in his palm and drank it. The Asura Vṛtra was exposed.

Once, Lord Brahma came to Agastya and told him that the daughter of a Sage named Kavēra was performing Tapas directed towards Lord Ṣiva, and that Agastya should marry her. Agastya went to her and requested her to marry him. She told him that she is about to become a river. Agastya married her anyway and kept her in his Kamanḍala*. On his way to the Vindhya mountain (*with the purpose of cutting the mountain to size*), Agastya gave the Kamanḍala to his disciples for safe keeping. They were carrying it carefully. One part or aspect of Kavēra's daughter manifested as Lōpāmudra. When the disciples carrying the Kamanḍala reached the Sahya mountain range, Kavēra's daughter, remembering her mission, started flowing as a river. This river is known as the Kāvēri. *Skānda Purāṇa*

While Lord Rāma was in the forest in exile, He visited Agastya in his Āṣram. In worship of his guest, Agastya gave Lord Rāma a pair of divine swords, a Ṣarāsana (*bed of arrows*) and a diamond-studded ornament. Lord Rāma later gave this ornament to one of His twin sons, Kuṣa. *Raghu Vamṣa*

During the Rāmāyaṇa war, Lord Rāma at one point was feeling depressed and losing his courage due to Rāvaṇa constantly raining arrows on Him. Agastya came to His side, reminded Him of His

greatness and suggested that He should chant the Ādityahṛdaya Mantra. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Agha – An Asura*, younger brother of Baka. Angry at Kṛshṇa because He killed Bakāsura, he took the form of a serpent and approached Kṛshṇa intending to hurt Him. As Kṛshṇa and His cowherd friends were feeding the cows, he swallowed Kṛshṇa, the cows and the cowherds. As Kṛshṇa entered the serpent's throat, He enlarged His body to such an extent that the serpent could not breathe and died. The cows and cowherds came out of the serpent's stomach. *Bhāgavata*

Aghamarshaṇa – A Tīrtha*. When Daksha Prajāpati* was performing Tapas* here, Lord Vishṇu was pleased with him and gave him a woman named Asikni as his wife. *Bhāgavata*

Āgnēyi – Wife of Ūru. *Matsya Purāṇa*

Agni I – Once upon a time, a Brahmin named Viṣvānara performed Tapas* in Kāṣi*, directed towards Lord Ṣiva, wishing for a son. Lord Ṣiva granted him a boon that a son would be born to him. As a result of the boon his wife Ṣuchishmati became pregnant and gave birth to a son. The son was named Vaiṣvānara by the Dēvas themselves. One day Sage Nārada came, saw the boy and informed his parents that the boy is at risk of dying in his twelfth year. The parents were saddened by the prediction, but the boy asked them to be brave and went to Kāṣi to perform Tapas directed towards Lord Ṣiva. While he was performing intense Tapas there, Indra* came to him and offered him a boon. Vaiṣvānara refused Indra's offer and told him he was praying to Lord Ṣiva and continued his meditation. Indra fired the Vajrāyudha

(*a thunderbolt, Indra's signature weapon, literally 'weapon of diamond'*) on the boy. Vaiṣvānara fainted. Then Lord Ṣiva arrived and said to Vaiṣvānara, "Arise! You will live a long life", and gave him boons and made him the Lord of Agni Lōka (*the southeast or Āgnēya direction*). Vaiṣvānara woke up from his fainting spell and went home. (*Kāṣi Khanḍa is a Sthala Purāṇa**.) *Skānda Purāṇa; Kāṣi Khanḍa*

In accordance with Lord Ṣiva's boon, Vaiṣvānara took charge of the Southeast *(according to the Purāṇas, the world is divided into eight sectors: north, northeast, east, southeast, south, southwest, west, and northwest. Each sector is ruled or protected by a God called a Dikpālaka*). Thus Vaiṣvānara became the God Agni. One of his functions was to carry the Havya* to the Dēvas. His transport is a ram. His wife's name was Swāhā.

Once upon a time the Dēvas won a war against the Asuras. They assumed that the victory was their own achievement. They were unaware that there was a Para Brahma* (*Supreme Being*). Para Brahma then appeared before them. Not recognizing Him, they sent Agni to find out who the apparition was. Agni went near Para Brahma who asked Agni who he was. Agni replied that his name was Agni and that he could burn everything. Para Brahma handed him a blade of grass and asked him to burn it. Agni was unable to burn that blade of grass however hard he tried. Surprised at his inability to burn a mere blade of grass, he returned to the Dēvas and confessed that he was unable to recognise the Great Being who gave him such a blade of grass. Because he was in the presence of Para Brahma, he became a premier Dēva even though he did not know Him. *Kēnōpanishad*

Once, Lord Brahma saw Rati (*the beautiful wife of Manmatha, the Love God*), and spontaneously ejaculated. Embarrassed, He covered the semen with a piece of cloth. His semen became a bright fire. That fire rose in fierce flames. Lord Kṛshṇa, with the exhaled air from his lungs, expelled a drop of sweat from his skin. The drop of fluid covered the entire world and extinguished the fire. Water has been able to extinguish fire since that time.

Once upon a time, a girl emerged from Agni's left side. She was named Swāhā and became Agni's wife. *Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa*

Once, Agni was upset, changed his form and started performing Tapas*. After a while, concerned that someone else might take over his position as the God of Fire (*It should be noted that many names such as Indra, Agni, etc., are actually positions which could be occupied by different individuals based on their qualifications and performance in the positions*), he stopped his Tapas. Just as he feared, Lord Brahma had replaced him with Angirasa as the God of Fire. Seeing how sad Agni was to lose his position, Angirasa offered to give the position back to Agni and be Agni's son.

Once upon a time, the great Sage Bhṛgu left his wife in Agni's home with a request that he protect her, and went somewhere. While she was in Agni's home, an Asura* named Pulōma came there and asked Agni whose wife she was. Knowing of Sage Bhṛgu's nature, Agni was afraid that he would be punished with a Ṣāpa* if he revealed who she was but he was also concerned that he would be guilty of lying if he pleaded ignorance of something he did know. Deciding in favour of telling the truth, he revealed that she was Bhṛgu's wife Pulōma. The Asura, saying she was

originally betrothed to him before Bhṛgu married her, took the form of a wild boar and carried her away. She escaped from the Asura when her son Chyavana killed him, went home and informed her husband of everything that happened. Feeling that Agni caused his wife's mishap, Bhṛgu gave Agni a Ṣāpa that he would be a cruel being that consumes everything. Agni in turn was angry and asked why he was being punished for answering the Asura's question truthfully. Agni then renounced his fiery form. The Dēvas thereby stopped receiving their Havya. They went to Lord Vishṇu and told Him how they were not receiving their Havya because of Agni's renunciation of his form. Lord Vishṇu accompanied the Dēvas as they went to Agni, prayed to him and assured him that even though he consumes everything, he is also the great purifier. Agni was pacified and resumed his form and his function of carrying Havya to the Dēvas.

Once, a Rājarshi (*royal Sage*) named Ṣvētaki was constantly performing a ritual with sacrificial fire. As a result, Agni was losing his brilliance and becoming ill. He went and complained to Lord Brahma who told him that the only way he can become healthy again is by consuming a forest full of divine medicinal herbs and suggested the Khāṇḍava forest for the purpose. Agni went to the Khāṇḍava forest, but was unable to consume it as it was protected by Indra (*who is his superior in the hierarchy of Dēvas*). He went back to Lord Brahma and said, "I went and tried to do what you suggested but I was unable, please give me an idea that will help". Lord Brahma informed him that Kṛshṇa and Arjuna will come there and grant him the ability to consume the Khāṇḍava forest. Soon thereafter, as Kṛshṇa and Arjuna were travelling

through Khāṇḍava, Agni approached them disguised as an old Brahmin. He told them he had been starving and requested them to provide a meal for him. When they asked what kind of food he wanted, he told them that he needed to consume Khāṇḍava but could not, as Takshaka was guarding it. They told him they had no weapons and asked him how they could help him. Agni then prayed to Varuṇa (*the God of Rain*) who brought them the following weapons: Chakra* and a Gada (*mace*) named Kaumōdaki for Kṛshṇa, the bow named Gāṇḍīva and a chariot for Arjuna. Thus armed, they told Agni they will protect him even if Indra opposes him and that he should consume Khāṇḍava. Agni then did so.

When Sages perform Hōmas* at new moon, their wives assist them doing necessary chores. Agni felt sexual desire for the women and in frustration, went away to the forest, sad and dejected. Agni's wife Swāhā, realizing this, took the form of Angirasa's wife Ṣiva, and went to Agni. She said to him, "I am the wife of a Sage and I desire you, please have sex with me". Agni happily obliged. She put his semen in a golden pot on Ṣvēta (*white*) mountain. She returned to Agni five more times, each time in the guise of a different Sage's wife, had sex and put the semen in golden pots. She did this disguised as the wife of six of the seven Sages (*except as Vasishṭha's wife Arundhati*). Kumāraswāmi (*also known as Shaṇmukha, Kārtikēya or Muruga*) was born from this semen (there are alternative versions of the birth of Kumāraswāmi, such as from Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa below, which also involves Agni).

Sudarṣana, the daughter of Duryōdhana (*different from the*

eldest of the Kauravas), a king of the lineage of Manu, used to do chores in the building where the holy fire was kept. Agni, infatuated by her beauty, took the form of a Brahmin and asked her to marry him. She told him that it was upto her parents to decide whom she should marry and that she was not free to decide herself. Agni went to Duryōdhana in his disguise as a Brahmin and asked for his daughter's hand in marriage. The king replied that he could not give his daughter in marriage to someone of a different caste. Agni got angry and left from the place where the king kept the holy fire. Duryōdhana prayed to Agni. Agni informed the Dēvas of his desire to marry the king's daughter. The Dēvas informed Duryōdhana, who was very happy to have Agni for his son-in-law. He performed his daughter's marriage with Agni. They had a son named Sudarṣana.

Once upon a time, Agni, disguised as a Brahmin, was roaming in a city named Māhishmati, romantically inclined towards other men's wives (*both Agni and his superior, Indra, were notoriously promiscuous*). The king's men arrested him and took him to the king, whose name was Nishadha. As the king was about to impose punishment on him, Agni flared up. The king, in fear, saluted Agni with a Namaskāra*. Agni told the king he would give him any boon he wanted. Nishadha asked that any enemy king entering his kingdom shall be attacked by Agni. Agni granted him the boon and asked that in return, the king should declare that women who commit adultery in his kingdom are not criminals.

A king named Marut was preparing to perform a Yāga with a Sage named Samvarta as the Ṛtvija*. Indra (*who is concerned about losing his position whenever someone performs a Yāga*),

called Agni, asked him to go to Marut and say to him, "Why did you invite Samvarta to be your Ṛtvija? Send him away and invite Bṛhaspati (*the Dēvas' Guru*)." Agni went to Marut and spoke as instructed by Indra. Samvarta threatened Agni with destruction if he interfered. Scared, Agni went back to Indra and related what happened. *Mahā Bhārata*

One day, as Lord Ṣiva and Pārvati were making love, Indra went to Agni, praised him lavishly and asked him to somehow stop their lovemaking. Bursting with pride from Indra's praise, Agni rushed to where Lord Ṣiva and Pārvati were and stood before them. Seeing Agni, Ṣiva walked away. Ṣiva's semen fell to the ground. Pārvati was upset and angry at Agni's appearance there and said, "Because you came here knowing it is improper to go where a husband and wife were making love, you have to receive Lord Ṣiva's semen." Since Pārvati's words are infallible, Agni became pregnant. Unable to bear the burden of pregnancy, Agni, seeing Ganga, requested her to take Lord Ṣiva's semen and relieve him of the pregnancy. Ganga agreed and Kumāraswāmi (*also known as Shaṇmukha, Kārtikēya or Muruga*) was born from this semen. *Brahmānḍa Purāṇa*

Agni married Swāhā, the daughter of King Nīladhwaja. Nīladhwaja captured the horse Dharmarāja released in the Aṣvamēdha Yāga*. Arjuna, who followed the horse, proceeded to battle Nīladhwaja. Agni, concerned that his father-in-law would be defeated by Arjuna, burned the army of Arjuna. Arjuna prayed to Agni. Agni restored Arjuna's army back to life, negotiated a conclusion of the fight, and convinced his father-in-law to release the horse. *Jaimini Bhārata*

Agni II – Son of Ūru and his wife Āgnēyi. *Matsya Purāṇa*

Agni Daivatya – A star, also known as Kṛttika. Hearing the rumour that the wives of six of the Saptarshi* had committed adultery with Agni and bore a son, the Sages abandoned their wives. The wives went to Kumāraswāmi and told him that they had lost their place in the Puṇya* Lōka (*world*) and requested him to restore their status. Kumāraswāmi asked Indra* what a suitable place would be for them. Indra told him: "A star named Abhijitti, normally next to Rōhiṇi, was performing Tapas* in order to become the favourite wife of the Moon. Her place is now vacant. Put them there." Kumāraswāmi turned the six wives of the Sages into a star named Agni Daivatya and installed it in Abhijitti's place. *Mahā Bhārata*

Agni Tīrtha – A Tīrtha* on the river Ganga. An older brother of Agni, named Jātavēda used to carry Havya* to the Dēvas from the shores of the Gautami river. An Asura* named Madhu killed Jātavēda. When Agni found out that his brother had been killed, he hid in the Ganga river. The world then was deprived of fire. The Dēvas praised Agni and told him that they could receive Havya only from him. Agni returned to his brother's place, which became Agni Tīrtha. *Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa*

Āgnīdhra – Son of Kukshi and and her husband Priyavrata. He ruled all of Jambūdwīpa (*literally "island named Jambū" – the Indian subcontinent*). When he was performing Tapas* wishing for sons, Lord Brahma sent an Apsara* named Pūrvachitta to him. Āgnīdhra fell in love with her and married her. He had sons named Nābhi, Kimpurusha, Harivarsha, Ilāvṛta, Ramya, Hiraṇvanta, Kuru,

Bhadrāṣva, and Kētumāla. He divided Jambūdwīpa into nine parts and gave them to his sons to rule. *Bhāgavata; Vishṇu Purāṇa*

Agnidyōtana – A Brahmin. Rukmiṇi sent a message through him asking Lord Kṛshṇa to marry her. *Bhāgavata*

Agnimitra I – Disciple of Bāshkala, who was a disciple of Pyla. He was taught the Samhita* of the Ṛg Vēda. *Bhāgavata*

Agnimitra II – Son of a king named Ṣṛnga. His son was Sujyēshṭa. *Bhāgavata*

Agnishṭuta – Also known as Agnisōma. Son of Chākshusha Manu*. *Agni Purāṇa*

Agnishvāttas – Sons of Marīchi. A group of divine entities called Pitṛ Dēvatas (*who protect descendants of their lineage*). *Mahā Bhārata*

Agnivarṇa I – Son of Sudarṣana, who was the grandson of Kalmāshapāda. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Agnivarṇa II – Son of Sudarṣana, who was the grandson of Pushya. He turned the governance of the country over to his ministers and constantly indulged in extravagant luxurious pursuits and sexual pleasures. His son was Ṣīghra. *Bhāgavata*

Agnivarṇa's wife was pregnant when he died. His ministers crowned his son as the king. *Raghu Vamṣa*

Agnivēṣa I – A Sage. He learnt an archery weapon (*weapons were deployed, recalled, or aborted with the use of specific Mantras that had to be learned from a guru*) named Brahmaṣira. He taught archery to Drōṇa (*Guru of both Kauravas and Pānḍavas*). *Mahā Bhārata*

Agnivēṣa II – Son of Dēvadatta, of the lineage of Arishya. He became a forest-dweller and a great Sage named Jātakarṇa. A Brahmin lineage named Agnivēṣyāyana was formed in his name. *Bhāgavata*

Ahalya – Daughter of Mudgala. Lord Brahma, after creating Ahalya, was considering who deserves a wife of such beauty. Indra* and the other Dēvas all came and clamored for her hand. Brahma announced that whoever circles the earth and comes back first will marry her. They all set out upon their journey around the earth. Sage Gautama circled a cow in the process of calving. Brahma decided that that was equivalent to circling the earth and gave Ahalya to him. *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*

Indra, having seen how beautiful Ahalya was, continued to desire her. One night, he came near Gautama's Āṣram in the form of a cock and crowed, signaling impending sunrise. Gautama left the house to perform his morning ablutions. As soon as he left, Indra took Gautama's form and slipped into bed beside Ahalya. She assumed it was her husband in bed with her. Realizing it was still night, Gautama returned home. Finding his wife in bed with Indra, he gave his wife a Ṣāpa* that she would become a rock and gave a Ṣāpa to Indra also. When Ahalya pleaded that she was innocent, Gautama told her that she would regain her form when Lord Rāma's foot touches her.

Sage Viṣvāmitra who took Rāma with him to protect his Yāga, was taking Him to Mithila and on the way, asked Him to place his foot on a rock. As soon as Rāma's foot touched the rock, Ahalya was relieved of her husband's Ṣāpa. Regaining her form, she saluted Rāma and Lakshmaṇa with a Namaskāra* and went on her

way. She had a son named Ṣatānanda. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Ahalya had a daughter by Gautama and sons by Sūrya and Indra*. The daughter informed Gautama that the sons were not his offspring. He threw the boys in the sea and gave Ahalya a Ṣāpa*. Angry for revealing her secret, Ahalya gave her daughter a Ṣāpa that she will be blind and that a Vānara* will be born to her. *Vichitra Rāmāyaṇa*

Ahamyāti – Son of Samyāti. His wife was Bhānumati. Their son was Sārvabhauma. *Mahā Bhārata*

Ahīna – Son of Dēvānīka. Father of Pāriyātra. A king of the Sūrya (*solar; one of the two major royal lineages, the other being Chandra, or lunar*) dynasty. *Bhāgavata*

Ahu – Son of Rati (*different from Manmatha's wife*) and Prajāpati. His son was Jyōti. *Mahā Bhārata*

Āhuka – A member of the Bhil tribe. His wife was named Āhuka. They were devotees of Lord Ṣiva. Lord Ṣiva, wanting to test their devotion, came to them disguised as a Yati (*ascetic*) and asked them to give him space in their residence. Āhuka replied that their place was very small and that they could not accommodate the Yati. The Yati, angry at the refusal, started to leave. Āhuka (*the wife*), seeing this, remonstrated with her husband and said they should be hospitable to the holy man. She requested the holy man to come back and said she would sleep outside and give her space in the cottage to him. Āhuka instead gave up his space and let the Yati sleep inside. A tiger came and killed Āhuka that night. Seeing his dead body the next morning, she lit the funeral pyre, performed the funeral rites for her husband and was about to immolate

herself on the fire. Lord Ṣiva then appeared in His own form, and pleased with her virtue and devotion to her husband, asked her to choose a boon. She said "give me whatever you think is proper". Lord Ṣiva told her that in a future life, Āhuka would be born as King Nala, she would be born as Damayanti, and that He would be a swan and help Nala and Damayanti get together. He then disappeared. *Ṣiva Purāṇa*

Airāvata I – White elephant which guards the east. It emerged when the ocean of milk was churned (*by the Dēvas and Asuras*). It became Indra's* transport. *Bhāgavata*

Airāvata II – Son of Kadruva. A Nāga*. He raised Takshaka's son Aṣvasēna. *Mahā Bhārata*

Aitarēya – Son of Itara, one of several wives of a Ṛshi (*Sage*). The father was fond of his other wives. Once, when Aitarēya sat on his father's lap in the Yāga hall, the father brushed him off. His sad mother prayed to Goddess Earth, who put him on a throne. *Aitarēya Brāhmaṇa*

Aja I– Mind-born son of Sthāṇu. He was one of the Ekādaṣa (*eleven*) Rudras. *Mahā Bhārata*

Aja II – Son of Raghu. He was named Aja (*one of the names of Lord Brahma*) because he was born at an auspicious time of day associated with Lord Brahma. He went to the Swayamvara* of a princess named Indumati who chose him as her husband. Some of the other princes who came to the Swayamvara attacked Aja out of jealousy. He defeated them and reached his capital with his bride. Daṣaratha (*father of Lord Rāma*) was their son. *Raghu Vaṃṣa*

Aja III – A Vānara*. Younger brother of Ṣanḍa. His daughter was Jantudhana. Once, while he, his brother and their daughters were strolling in a forest, an Asura* roared in a fearsome manner. All the animals fled in fear, but the brothers' daughters did not fear the Asura and went to see him. Both girls were given in marriage to the Asura by their fathers. When they refused to accompany their husband to his home, their fathers gave them much wealth and sent them with their husband. *Brahmānḍa Purāṇa*

Ajagara – A Brahmin. Prahlāda (*a great devotee of Vishṇu; son of the Asura Hiraṇyakaṣipu*) once requested him to teach him equanimity (*being free of passion*). He explained to Prahlāda the system he follows: always be content; be pure; be patient; do not wish either for good luck or avoidance of misfortune; avoid being upset whatever happened; do not care whether you have to wear clothing of rough fibre or pure silk. *Mahā Bhārata*

Ajahna – Son of a king named Jahna and father of Pallavya. *Mahā Bhārata*

Ajaka I – Son of Jahnu, who was the son of Sunahu. His son was Balakāṣva. *Brahma Purāṇa*

Ajaka II – A king of the Pradyōta lineage. He was the son of Viṣākhayūpa, who was the son of Pradyōta. His son was Nandivardhana. *Brahma Purāṇa*

Ajamīḍha I – Son of Vikanṭhana. He had three wives named Kaikēyi (*different from Rāma's aunt*), Gāndhāri (*different from the mother of the Kauravas*) and Ṛksha. He had one hundred and twenty sons by them. One of his sons was Samvaraṇa. *Mahā Bhārata*

Ajamīḍha II – Son of King Hasti and father of Bṛhadisha. His descendants including Priyamēdha became Brahmins. He and his wife Naḷini had a son named Nīla. One of Nīla's sons was Ṛksha. *Bhāgavata*

Ajāmiḷa – A Brahmin. He was well versed in the Vēdas and other scriptures and lived bound by Dharma (*righteous path*). One day, on his way back from the forest after gathering flowers per his father's request, he passed a greenhouse where a man was making passionate love to a woman. Sexually aroused intensely by what he saw, he abandoned home and family, his righteous lifestyle and started living with a Ṣūdra* woman, indulging in promiscuous sex and committing sinful acts with abandon. He had children by the woman. Among his children, he was especially fond of a son named Nārāyaṇa. Eventually, he became old and ill and was about to die. Because he had led a life full of sin, the servants of Yama came to take his soul to hell. Just then he called out to his favourite son, "Nārāyaṇa!" As soon as he did that, Lord Vishṇu's servants came there because Nārāyaṇa was one of Lord Vishṇu's names. They told the servants of Yama that even though he had only called out to his son, because he uttered one of Lord Vishṇu's names, Yama's servants had no reason to be there. Ajāmiḷa thus avoided being taken to hell. Noticing the arrival of Lord Vishṇu's servants and then the disappearance of both them and Yama's servants, Ajāmiḷa realized that his previous good deeds and righteous living made him call out one of Lord Vishṇu's names. He repented for his sins, went to the shore of the Ganga river, died and went to heaven. *Bhāgavata*

Ajāmiḷa was re-born as a Brahmin named Jantumāna Mandara.

Brahma Purāṇa

Ajamukhi – Daughter of Surasa and Kaṣyapa. Ṣūrapadmāsura was among her siblings. She used to catch handsome men and force them to have sex with her. Sage Durvāsa was one of the men with whom she had sex. She and Durvāsa had sons named Vātāpi and Ilvala. *Skānda Purāṇa*

Ajanābha – Former name of Bharatavarsha (*India's name in Sanskrit*), prior to Bharata's reign. *Bhāgavata*

Ajātaṣatru – The sixth king of the Ṣaiṣunāga dynasty. Son of Vidhisāra and father of Darbhaka. *Bhāgavata*

Ajaya – A king of the Ṣivanāga dynasty. He was the son of Darbhaka and father of Nandivardhana. *Bhāgavata*

Ajīgarta – Father of Ṣunaṣṣēpha. He was very poor. Once, during a famine, he sold his son Ṣunaṣṣēpha to avoid starving to death. He was turned into a fiend because of this sinful act. The servants of Yama were torturing him. Hearing this and feeling bad that his father's misfortune was due to him, Ṣunaṣṣēpha performed Tapas* on the banks of the holy river Gautami and caused his father to be released from his fiendish form. *Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa*

Ajita I – During the reign of a Manu* named Chākshusha, Lord Vishṇu was born as the son of Vairāja and his wife Sambhūti and was named Ajita. *Bhāgavata*

Ajita II – A woman. She was the daughter of Ausīnarapati. In a Swayamvara*, she chose to marry five brothers named Sālvēya, Ṣūrasēna, Ṣrutasēna, Bindusāra, and Atisāra. *Mahā Bhārata*

Akampana I – Son of Sumāli. He informed Rāvaṇa of the death

of Khara and Dūshaṇa. He also advised that abducting Sīta was a way to kill Rāma. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Akampana II – A king. His son died in a war which he had won. As he was lamenting the death of his son, Sage Nārada came and comforted him by explaining the cycle of life and death. *Mahā Bhārata*

Ākarkara – Son of Kadruva. A Nāga*. *Mahā Bhārata*

Ākāṣaraja – Son of Sudharma. His daughter was Padmāvati with whom Lord Vēnkaṭēṣwara fell in love on first sight. Ākāṣaraja not only gave his daughter Padmāvati in marriage to Lord Vēnkaṭēṣwara but also built a temple for Him in Tirupati. (*Vēnkaṭēṣwara Māhātmyam is a 'Sthala Purāṇa'**). *Vēnkaṭēṣwara Māhātmyam*

Akrōdhana – Son of Ayutānīka. His wife was Karambha. Dēvātithi was their son. *Mahā Bhārata*

Akṛtavraṇa – Son of a Sage named Ṣānta. While still a boy, he went on a pilgrimage of holy places. He lost his way and wandered into a forest. A fiercely growling tiger was about to spring on him when Paraṣurāma (*sixth incarnation of Lord Vishṇu*) happened to be passing by. Paraṣurāma killed the tiger and saved the boy's life. Akṛtavraṇa became a friend and disciple of Paraṣurāma and followed him everywhere from then on. He was the person who explained the greatness of Paraṣurāma to Dharmarāja. Once, as he was at a lake to quench his thirst, a crocodile in the lake grabbed his foot. He managed to free himself from the crocodile and placed a Ṣāpa* on the lake that anyone who stepped into the lake will become a tiger. Dharmarāja's sacrificial horse happened to step

into the lake and became a tiger. Lord Kṛshṇa turned it back into a horse. *Brahmānḍa Purāṇa; Jaimini Bhārata*

Akrūra – Son of Ṣvaphalka. His mother was Gāndini. He lived in Mathura (*Kamsa's capital*). Once, Kamsa sent him to invite his nephews Kṛshṇa and Balarāma to his city on the pretext of viewing the religious rite he was performing called Dhanuryāga (*archery ceremony*), while his real intent was to kill them. Akrūra was glad for the opportunity to see Gōvinda (*one of Lord* Kṛshṇa*'s many names, whom Akrūra knew to be Lord Vishṇu's incarnation*). He was also concerned of what Kṛshṇa would say. He, therefore, first revealed Kamsa's intentions.

Satrājit, Satyabhāma's father, gave her in marriage to Kṛshṇa after promising her to Ṣatadhanva. Akrūra went to Ṣatadhanva and advised him not to tolerate this insult and encouraged him to kill Satrājit. Ṣatadhanva did as advised. Kṛshṇa attacked Ṣatadhanva to avenge his father-in-law's death. Ṣatadhanva requested Akrūra's help. Akrūra, afraid of Kṛshṇa's rage, ran away far from Dwāraka. As a result, a drought gripped Dwāraka. Told that the drought will end only if Akrūra returns, Kṛshṇa gave an assurance that he will not hurt Akrūra. Akrūra gave Kṛshṇa a diamond called Ṣyamantaka which Ṣatadhanva had given him. Dēvala and Anupadēva were his sons. *Mahā Bhārata*

Akshahṛdaya – A special skill which enables those who have it to understand and use numbers to advantage. Ṛtuparṇa had this skill and could tell how many leaves or fruit were on a tree without counting them. He taught this skill to King Nala. Kali, who had possessed Nala at the time, came out of him to learn the skill. *Mahā Bhārata*

Akshasūtra – Wife of Āpastamba. Their son was Karki. *Brahmānḍa Purāṇa*

Akshayakumāra – Son of the Asura* Rāvaṇa. When the Vānara* Hanumān entered Lanka* and was destroying gardens there, and killing Rāvaṇa's soldiers, he tried to capture Hanumān. Hanumān defeated and drove him off. Hanumān later killed him in the Rāmāyaṇa war. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Akshayapātra – While the Pānḍavas were in the forest during their twelve year exile, several Brahmins tagged along with them. The Pānḍavas were obliged to provide meals for them. As Dharmarāja was worrying how to obtain the necessary provisions, Sage Dhaumya advised him to pray to Sūrya (*the Sun God*). When Dharmarāja did as advised, Sūrya gave him a copper vessel. The vessel had the magical power that when Draupadi cooked even a small amount of food in it, the food became Akshaya (*unlimited*). Pānḍavas were able to provide meals for their large retinue using the vessel through their entire stay in the forest. *Mahā Bhārata*

Ākūpāra – A very old (*articulate*) turtle, older than Mārkanḍēya. When a king named Indradyumna came to earth from Indra* Lōka (*heaven*), only this turtle was able to recognise him. *Mahā Bhārata*

Ākūti I – Daughter of Swāyambhu and wife of a Prajāpati* named Ruchi. She had a daughter named Dakshiṇa (*Goddess Lakshmi*) and a son named Yagjna (*Lord Vishṇu*). *Bhāgavata*

Ākūti II – Wife of Pṛthushēṇa, who was the son of Vibhu. Her son was named Nakta. *Bhāgavata*

Alaka – Capital city of Kubēra (*the God of Wealth*). *Ṣiva Purāṇa*

Alambasa – Daughter of Tṛṇabindu's daughter Ilabila. She fell in love with Tṛṇabindu himself and married him. She had a daughter named Ilabila, and sons named Ṣūnyabandhu, Dhūmrakētu and Viṣāla. *Vishṇu Purāṇa*

Alambusa – An Apsara*. She was sent to disrupt the Tapas* of Sage Dadhīchi by Indra*. On seeing her, Dadhīchi ejaculated. *Mahā Bhārata*

Alambusu – An Asura*. Son of Jaṭāsura. Younger brother of Baka and Kimmīra. Having had a previous conflict with the Pānḍavas, he requested Duryōdhana to allow him to fight on the Kaurava side. He killed Arjuna's son Irāvanta (*by his Nāga wife Ulūchi; each of the Pānḍavas had at least one wife he did not share with his brothers, in addition to Draupadi, shared by all five*) and later fought and was killed by Ghaṭōtkacha (*son of Bhīma and Hiḍimbi*). *Mahā Bhārata*

Alarka I – Insect that stung Karṇa while Paraṣurāma (*sixth incarnation of Lord Vishṇu*) was sleeping with his head resting on Karṇa's lap. When Paraṣurāma saw it, it was released from a Ṣāpa* and regained the form of an Asura* named Prāgdamṣa and went away. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Alarka II – Son of Madālasa and and her husband Kuvalayāṣva. Even though he had older brothers, he became the king after his father. He indulged in carnal pleasures and neglected the affairs of state. Hoping to change his behaviour, his brother Subāhu approached his enemy, the king of Kāṣi*, and asked him to give his brother's kingdom to him. The king of Kāṣi sent an emissary

named Chara to Alarka to ask him to give up the throne to his brother. Alarka told the emissary that he would give up the throne if his older brother had asked him to do so, but would not give it up due to fear of the king of Kāṣi. The king of Kāṣi invaded Alarka's kingdom and Alarka was weakened by the fighting. Looking at a ring his late mother had given him, he realized that the body is fragile and temporary, and the path of lasting happiness was different from the way he had been living. He went to the great Guru Dattātrēya, and receiving much Gjnāna (*knowledge and wisdom*) from him, gave his kingdom to his older brother and retired to the Tapōvana* to perform Tapas*. *Mārkanḍēya Purāṇa*

Alāyudhāsura – Brother of Bakāsura. Because of his anger at Bhīma (*for killing his brother Baka*), he approached Duryōdhana and voluntarily fought on the Kaurava side during the war. He was killed by Ghaṭōtkacha (*son of Bhīma and Hiḍimbi; each of the Pānḍavas had at least one wife he did not share with his brothers, in addition to Draupadi, shared by all five*). *Mahā Bhārata*

Amarabāhu – A king of the Sūrya (*solar; one of the two major royal lineages, the other being Chandra, or lunar*) dynasty. Son of Anaraṇya. Rāvaṇa killed Anaraṇya by deceit. Amarabāhu, desirous of avenging his father's death by killing Rāvaṇa, prayed to Lord Vishṇu, who appeared to him and told him that no one but He himself can kill Rāvaṇa and that He will be born as a prince of the Sūrya dynasty to achieve that purpose. *Vichitra Rāmāyaṇa*

Amarka – Son of Ṣukra (*the Guru of Asuras**). He was the Asuras' Yāga priest. *Mahā Bhārata*

Amarshaṇa – Son of Sandhi and father of Mahāsvanta. *Mahā*

Bhārata

Amāvasu – (*also known as Amavasu*) Son of Purūrava and the Apsara* Ūrvaṣi. *Bhāgavata*

Amba – Eldest daughter of Hōtravāhana, the king of Kāṣi*. Ambika and Ambālika were her younger sisters. Amba was in love with King Sālva and wished to marry him. However, during the Swayamvara*, Bhīshma arrived uninvited to the Swayamvara, defeated the assembled kings and princes and spirited away the three sisters as brides for his half-brother. When they reached Hastināpura, the Kaurava empire's capital, Amba revealed that she loved Sālva and begged Bhīshma to send her to Sālva. Bhīshma complied with her request, but Sālva refused to marry her, contending that her virtue had been compromised by her being taken away to marry another. He refused to consider her explanation that her virtue was intact because, as soon as she told Bhīshma that she loved Sālva, Bhīshma let her go. Amba then returned to Hastināpura and asked Bhīshma to either marry her himself or let her marry his half-brother. Bhishma refused to marry her because of his vow to remain a bachelor his whole life and said she is ineligible to marry his brother (*the future emperor of the Kuru empire*) because she had another in her heart.

Amba was very sad and angry that her life had been ruined by Bhīshma's intemperate action and interference with the Swayamvara. Resolved to defeat her tormentor, Amba started to perform Tapas*, to gain boons that would help her fight the mighty and powerful Bhīshma. Some Sages who were around tried to dissuade her saying that the kind of Tapas she was embarking on is beyond her ability given her gender and her tender age. They

advised her to go back to her father. Undeterred, she went into a forest where nobody could see her or discourage her. There, she encountered her father Hōtravāhana and told him about the humiliation she suffered after Bhīshma abducted her and her sisters. Hōtravāhana advised her to seek the help of Paraṣurāma (*the sixth Avatāra or incarnation of Lord Vishṇu; Bhīshma's Guru*). A Sage named Akṛtavraṇa informed Amba and her father that Paraṣurāma was expected to come to that place the next day. They waited and met Paraṣurāma. Hōtravāhana detailed to Paraṣurāma the injustice to Amba perpetrated by Sālva and Bhīshma. When Paraṣurāma asked, "Who should I deceive? Sālva? Or Bhīshma?", they chose Bhīshma. Paraṣurāma took Amba along and went to Bhīshma and asked him to persuade his half-brother to marry Amba. Bhīshma refused to intercede because Amba had loved another man and therefore, was not eligible to marry the future emperor of the Kuru dynasty. Paraṣurāma then fought Bhīshma (*it was the convention in those days that the loser of a fight has to obey the victor; Paraṣurāma might have assumed that he could defeat Bhīshma*). The intense fight went on for twenty four days without a conclusion. Dēvas and Ṛshis (*Sages with great spiritual powers*) came and implored them to stop fighting. Paraṣurāma gave up and told Amba that he could not help her. Determined more than ever to defeat Bhīshma, Amba continued her Tapas with greater intensity, moving from one Āṣram to another, including that of Sage Kauṣika. Eventually Lord Ṣiva, pleased with her intense Tapas, appeared before her and asked her what boon she wanted. Amba asked for the ability to kill Bhīshma. Lord Ṣiva told her that she will be reborn as Ṣikhanḍi, a

daughter of King Drupada, have her sex changed to male and cause the death of Bhīshma. She immediately immolated herself and was born as King Drupada's daughter. (*There was a comlplicated reason why she had to be reborn as a girl and undergo a sex change, rather than be born a boy, in order to be instrumental in Bhīshma's death; Bhīshma had received a boon from his father Ṣantanu that he can determine the manner and time of his own death [Swacchanda Maraṇa]. Because of that, even a great warrior like Arjuna could not defeat Bhīshma while he was armed and fighting. Bhīshma had also vowed that he will not take up arms against anyone not born male. When Bhīshma saw the sex-changed Ṣikhanḍi in Arjuna's chariot, he unilaterally disarmed and Arjuna, from behind Ṣikhanḍi, shot arrows at Bhīshma and wounded him. Bhīshma stopped fighting and lay on a bed of arrows on the battle-field, and at an auspicious time of his choosing, breathed his last.*) *Mahā Bhārata*

Ambālika – Daughter of the king of Kāṣi*, sister of Amba and Ambika. During the Swayamvara* for the three sisters, Bhīshma took them all away and got Ambālika and Ambika married to his half-brother Vichitravīrya. Her husband died before she could have a child. Her mother-in-law Satyavati asked her to have intercourse with Sage Vyāsa (*Satyavati's son by Sage Parāṣara*) in order to keep the royal dynasty from ending, by having a Kshētraja* son. At the time of intercourse, she went pale at the sight of Vyāsa (*scared by his long white hair and beard*). As a result, a Pānḍu (*albino*) son was born to her and was accordingly named Pānḍu. Sage Vyāsa, predicting that the sons of Pānḍu and the sons of Dhṛtarāshṭra (*son of Ambika, also by Vyāsa*) will be enemies and

that there will be trouble as a result, advised the women to go to the Tapōvana*. Ambālika left for Tapōvana along with Ambika and Satyavati. *Mahā Bhārata*

Ambarīsha I – A king of Ayōdhya (*the capital from which Lord Rāma once ruled*). Once, while he was performing a Yāga, an Asura* came and stole the sacrificial animal. The priest in charge of the sacrificial rite told him that since he could not protect the sacrificial animal until the end of the Yāga, the rite was interrupted, and that would result in the destruction of the king performing the rite. The priest suggested that if the king could not find another suitable animal, a sacrificial human should be used. Ambarīsha looked everywhere but failed in his search. Ambarīsha then went to a Sage named Ruchīka and said to him "Someone stole my sacrificial animal and I am unable to find another one. I will give you a hundred thousand cows in exchange for one of your sons to be used as the sacrificial animal." Ruchīka told him that he dearly loves his oldest son and could not give him up. Ruchīka's wife said she is very fond of the youngest son and could not let him go. The middle son, named Ṣunaṣṣēpha told Ambarīsha that he is willing to be the sacrificial animal. Ambarīsha gave Ruchīka the cows he promised and took Ṣunaṣṣēpha. Sage Viṣvāmitra saw them on their way to the Yāga and taught Ṣunaṣṣēpha a Mantra (*powerful magical chant*). On reaching the place where the Yāga was being performed, Ṣunaṣṣēpha was tied to a post. He then kept chanting the Mantra taught him by Viṣvāmitra. Indra* appeared and gave Ṣunaṣṣēpha the benefits of the Yāga, making the sacrifice unnecessary, and had Ṣunaṣṣēpha released. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Ambarīsha II – Son of Nābhāga. Ambarīsha had performed many

Aṣvamēdha Yāgas*. He ruled his kingdom in such a manner that every action of his was an act of devotion to Lord Vishṇu. He treated gold and clay as the same (*he was not enamored with riches*). Once, after he performed a religious rite named Dwādaṣivrata, and ensured that all the invited Brahmins had a sumptuous feast, he was ready to start eating his own meal when Sage Durvāsa (*known for his quick temper and ready Ṣāpas* for hurling at any one who he felt slighted him*) arrived. Ambarīsha invited him to enjoy a feast and waited for him to freshen up. Durvāsa was taking a very long time on his bath and Ambarīsha was concerned that the day (*Dwādaṣi, the twelfth day of the lunar fortnight*) would end before Durvāsa returns. Ambarīsha was in a quandary as he could not have his meal until Durvāsa finishes his and if Ambarīsha did not eat before the end of Dwādaṣi, the beneficial results of the religious rite would not accrue to him. He consulted his elder advisers on how to ensure the benefits of the rite without violating the rule of not eating before a guest finishes his meal. They advised that he should drink some water, which would fulfill the requirements of the religious rite without violating the restriction on eating before a guest ate his meal. Ambarīsha did accordingly but Durvāsa, arriving back and realizing that the host drank water without waiting for him, became angry. Durvāsa created an Asura* called Mahākṛtya from a lock of his hair, to attack Ambarīsha. Lord Vishṇu's Chakra* killed Mahākṛtya and pursued Durvāsa. Durvāsa ran to Lord Brahma first, and to Lord Ṣiva, seeking protection from the Chakra. When they could not help him, he ran to Lord Vishṇu Himself and begged Him to save him. Lord Vishṇu told him that He was under the control of His

devotees and only Ambarīsha himself could save Durvāsa. Durvāsa then went back to Ambarīsha, apologised to him and begged for his life. Ambarīsha took pity on Durvāsa and prayed to Lord Vishṇu to withdraw His weapon. Ambarīsha had sons named Virūpa, Kētumanta and Ṣubha. *Bhāgavata*

Ambarīsha III – A king. He performed many Yāgas. When he went to Indra* Sabha (*court*) after his death, he saw one of his soldiers, named Sudēva, on a beautiful flying vehicle. He said, "I performed many Yāgas. This Sudēva was one of my many soldiers and he had not performed even a single Yāga. How could he come here?" (See **Sudēva**) *Mahā Bhārata*

Ambarīsha IV – Son of Bindumati and and her husband Māndhāta. He was adopted by his grandfather, Yuvanāṣva. His son was named Yauvanāṣva. Yauvanāṣva had a son named Hārīta. When a Brahmin from the Māndhāta Gōtra announces himself (*such as at his thread ceremony*), he will say "I am from the Pravara (*lineage*) of Ambarīsha, Yauvanāṣva, and Hārīta. *Bhāgavata*

Ambarīsha V – A king of the Ikshvāku lineage. Son of Padmāvati. He performed Tapas* directed towards Lord Vishṇu. Lord Vishṇu appeared to him disguised as Indra* and asked what boons he would like. He replied that he is not seeking any boons from Indra and that he was praying to Lord Vishṇu. Lord Vishṇu then took on His own form. Ambarīsha requested that Lord Vishṇu's Chakra* should protect him whenever he requests it. Ambarīsha had a daughter named Ṣrīmati. Once, Sage Nārada and his nephew Parvata each expressed a desire to marry Ambarīsha's

daughter. Ambarīsha promised to give her in marriage to one of them. When he held a Swayamvara* for her, Lord Vishṇu came and took her away. Nārada and Parvata questioned why Ambarīsha gave his daughter to someone else after promising her to one of them. They gave him a Ṣāpa* that he will be drowned in Tamas (*ignorance or darkness*). As soon as they said that, Lord Vishṇu's Chakra began to chase them. They ran to Vaikunṭha (*Lord Vishṇu's abode*). *Linga Purāṇa*

Ambashṭha – Trainer and driver of the elephants of Kamsa (*Lord Kṛshṇa's evil uncle*). When Lord Kṛshṇa and his brother Balarāma were in Mathura to visit Kamsa, he drove an elephant named Kuvalayāpīḍa at them to run over them. They asked him to drive the elephant away from them. He refused. Lord Kṛshṇa killed both the elephant and Ambashṭha. *Bhāgavata*

Ambika - Daughter of the king of Kāṣi*, sister of Amba and Ambālika. During the Swayamvara* for the three sisters, Bhīshma took them all away and got Ambālika and Ambika married to his half-brother Vichitravīrya. Her husband died before she could have a child. Her mother-in-law Satyavati asked her to have intercourse with Sage Vyāsa (*Satyavati's son by Sage Parāṣara*) in order to keep the royal dynasty from ending, by having a Kshētraja* son. At the time of intercourse, repelled by the appearance of Vyāsa, she closed her eyes. As a result, a blind son was born to her and was named Dhṛtarāshṭra. Hearing Vyasa's prediction that her son's children will be destructive of the dynasty, she accompanied her mother-in-law to the Tapōvana*. *Mahā Bhārata*

Amṛta – Wife of Anaṣva. *Mahā Bhārata*

Amṛtam – When Pṛthu ruled as emperor, the earth took the form of a cow. When Pṛthu, using Indra* as a calf, milked her, Amṛtam* flowed. But due to a Ṣāpa* by Durvāsa, Amṛtam fell into the sea. It reemerged when the ocean of milk was churned. The Dēvas and Asuras* churned the ocean together but the Dēvas took the Amṛtam and prevented the Asuras from having any of it. To prevent the Asuras from attacking the Dēvas and snatching the Amṛtam before the Dēvas all had some, Lord Vishṇu took a beautiful female form as Jaganmōhini (*enchantress to the world*) to charm and distract the Asuras. Indra zealously guards the Amṛtam because anyone who drinks it will be immortal. *Bhāgavata*

Amṣumanta I – Son of Aditi and Kaṣyapa. One of the Dwādaṣa (*twelve*) Adityas (*suns*). *Bhāgavata*

Amṣumanta II – A king of the Sūrya (*solar; one of the two major royal lineages, the other being Chandra, or lunar*) dynasty. Grandson of Sagara and son of Asamanjasa. After his sixty thousand sons all died, Sagara sent his grandson to Sage Kapila to search for and bring the sacrificial horse. Following the trail taken by his father and uncles, Amṣumanta saw Kapila, the horse, and an ash heap. Amṣumanta just stood there saluting Kapila and did not ask for the horse or mention that the ash heap was what became of his father and uncles. Kapila was pleased with Amṣumanta's humility and told him he could take the horse, go back and inform Sagara of the death of his sons. He also asked Amṣumanta what boon he would like. Amṣumanta requested Kapila to let him know a way for his father and uncles to be cleansed of their sins and reach heaven. Pleased with Amṣumanta's respect for his father and

uncles, Kapila told him that because they sinned greatly, they would be reborn a few times but that they would reach heaven with the help of Amṣumanta's grandson Bhagīratha. Amṣumanta took the horse and brought it to his grandfather Sagara. Sagara completed the Yāga and crowned Amṣumanta as his successor. Amṣumanta went to the forest and performed Tapas to bring the sacred river Ganga to the place where his fathers perished (*to wash away their sins*) but died before accomplishing his objective. *Bhāgavata*

As Amṣumanta stood in front of the ash heap to which his father and uncles had been reduced, the divine bird Garutmanta* consoled him and advised him to bring the sacred river Ganga there to wash their sins away and give them a good afterlife. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Amṣumanta's son was Dilīpa. When Dilīpa reached maturity, Amṣumanta crowned him king and went to the forest to perform Tapas*. *Bhāgavata; Brahmānḍa Purāṇa*

Ānaka – Brother of Vasudēva. *Bhāgavata*

Ānakadundubhi – Vasudēva (*father of Lord Kṛshṇa*). When Kṛshṇa was born, the sound of Dundubhis (*drums*) was heard from Vasudēva's house. *Hari Vamṣa*

Anala – One of the eight Vasus. His wife was Ṣiva. His sons were Manōjava and Avigjnātagati. *Matsya Purāṇa*

Anāmika – One of the fingers on a person's hand (*the word is Sanskrit for "nameless"; it is now the ring finger*). Lord Ṣiva cut off Lord Brahma's fifth head with this finger on his hand. Since then, this finger has been considered unholy or inauspicious. For

this reason, a Darbha (*sacred grass*) leaf referred to as "Pavitra" is put on this finger during religious rituals such as a Yāga. *Matsya Purāṇa*

Anamitra – Son of Yudhājit. Nimna, Ṣini, and Praṣni were his sons. *Bhāgavata*

Ānanda – The name given to Chākshushu Manu* by Vikrānta's wife while he was growing up in Vikrānta's house. (See **Chākshushu**) *Bhāgavata*

Ananga – Son of Kardama. Lord Vishṇu, after a Nīti Ṣāstra (*Code of Morality*) was created, asked His Mānasa Putra (*mind-born son*) named Viraja to implement it in the world. Viraja refused to go to earth. Kardama was Viraja's son. Ananga ruled the whole world. His son was Nīti. *Mahā Bhārata*

Ananta – Wife of Janamējaya (*different from Arjuna's great-grandson*), son of Purūra. She was the mother of Prāchīṣa. *Mahā Bhārata*

Ananta Muni – Son of a Brahmin named Vidruma, born when his father, who was childless for a long time, was an old man. The son was born a eunuch. Vidruma prayed to Lord Ṣiva to make his son virile. Lord Ṣiva made him a real man. Once, while he was bathing in the ocean, an alligator dragged him away. After a long time, he washed ashore, unconscious. An old Brahmin named Vṛddhaṣarma took him home, raised him and gave his daughter Chārumati in marriage to him. *Kalki (Bhavishya) Purāṇa*

Ananta Vijaya – The conch (*each great warrior had a conch with a distinct sound, which they used to announce their arrival on the*

battlefield) of Dharmarāja. *Mahā Bhārata*

Ananti – Wife of Swāyambhu, the first Manu*. Mother of Priyavrata and Uttānapāda. *Matsya Purāṇa*

Anaraṇya I – Rāvaṇa, at one time, was waging war on other kings. Many kings were intimidated by Rāvaṇa. Anaraṇya said "I will fight you" and attacked Rāvaṇa. He was defeated and humiliated by Rāvaṇa. Rāvaṇa cut off his head. The severed head told Rāvaṇa, "This is not your valour. There is God who makes things happen. I fell because it was time for me to die. This is my Ṣāpa* that you will be killed by a descendant of mine named Rāma". Rāvaṇa, angry at these words, smashed the severed head into small pieces. *Rāmāyaṇa;Uttara Rāmāyaṇa*

Anaraṇya II – Son of Bāṇa, a king of the Sūrya (*solar; one of the two major royal lineages, the other being Chandra, or lunar*) dynasty. His son was Pṛthu. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Anaraṇya III – A king. He performed many Yāgas. One day, he went to the lake named Mānasa to bathe and seeing a golden lotus there, ordered his minister to pick it and bring it to him. He was immediately stricken with leprosy. Sage Vasishṭha examined him and told him that he was so afflicted because he coveted something that came from Lord Brahma's stomach. He advised the king to perform an Ārōgya (*health*) Vrata* in order to be cured of his illness. The king did as advised and regained his health. *Varāha Purāṇa*

Anaraṇya IV – Son of Trasadasya and father of Haryaṣva. *Bhāgavata*

Ānarta I – Son of Ṣaryāti. He was the king for whom the country of Ānarta was named. His son was Rōchamāna (*also known as Raivata*). *Bhagavata; Matsya Purāṇa*

Ānarta II – A country near Dwāraka, on the shores of the Yavana sea (*now called the Arabian Sea*). It was so named since it was ruled by a king named Ānarta. *Bhāgavata*

Anaṣva – Son of Vidūratha and husband of Amṛta. Their son was Parīkshit (*different from Arjuna's grandson*). *Mahā Bhārata*

Anasūya – Daughter of Dēvahūti and Sage Kardama. Wife of Sage Atri. She was a Pativrata*. She served her husband as if he was God and received much Gjnāna (*knowledge and wisdom*) from him.

Once, Lord Brahma, Lord Vishṇu and Lord Ṣiva were traveling on their transports to Mēru mountain. After they covered some distance, their transports stopped moving. However hard they tried, they could not proceed. Then Lord Vishṇu's transport Garutmanta* said to Him, "Lord! Sage Atri's Āṣram is nearby. His wife is a great Pativrata. She decreed that no one overfly this Āṣram." They went on their way by a different route. Afterward, wanting to test her power, they disguised themselves as Brahmins and went to Atri's Āṣram. Atri offered them hospitality. They told him that they are observing a ritual and that to comply with it, the lady who serves their meal that day must do so while naked. Sage Atri said nothing, but looked at his wife. She did not mind. The three Brahmins washed themselves and sat down. Anasūya silently chanted a Mantra and sprinkled Akshatas (*turmeric-coated rice used in religious rituals to bless someone with*) and water over

them. They were instantly turned into babies. She took her clothes off, served the food, dressed herself and sprinkled water on them again. They regained their normal forms and ate their meal. She turned them into babies again and kept them with her. When Pārvati, Lakshmi, and Sarasvati came searching for their husbands, she handed the babies over to the wives. Pleased and impressed with Anasūya's power, the trinity appeared in their real forms and asked her what boon she desired. She asked for sons like them. They granted her wish to have sons with their attributes.

Once, because of a command from the wife of Sage Kauṣika (*because there was a Ṣāpa that he will die when the Sun rises next*), the Sun stopped rising and the world went dark. Indra* and other Dēvas prayed to Lord Brahma to dispel the darkness. Brahma told them that only Anasūya is capable of doing that. They went to Anasūya and begged her for her help. Anasūya, aware that the Sun was not rising because of a Ṣāpa by another great Pativrata, the wife of Sage Kauṣika, went to her and asked her to allow the Sun to rise. Anasūya promised her that when Kauṣika dies as a result, she would bring him back to life. Kauṣika's wife then ordered the Sun to rise. The Sun rose, Kauṣika died and Anasuya resuscitated him. Lord Brahma, Lord Vishṇu, and Lord Ṣiva were pleased that Anasūya was instrumental in releasing the world from darkness and asked her what boon she would like. She asked for sons like them.

Once, when Atri was making love to his wife, as his semen was about to enter her womb, Vāyu (*the God of Wind*) divided it into three parts: one flew up into Vāyu's eye and became Chandra. The other two parts entered Anasūya's womb. While Anasūya was

pregnant, a king named Haihaya caused her to abort. Lord Ṣiva, realizing this, entered her womb and was born as Durvāsa. Dattātrēya was the son born to Anasūya with Lord Vishṇu's attributes. *Mārkanḍēya Purāṇa*

Once, when Atri was leaving home to go to the forest to perform Tapas*, his wife stood in front of him. He asked her, "Will you come with me to perform Tapas or stay home and look after our children?" She replied that it was not proper for him to leave without showing her the means to provide for the family's needs. Atri went to King Pṛthu, received wealth from him and gave it to his wife. *Mahā Bhārata*

Once upon a time, when a severe drought occurred, Anasūya performed Tapas on the banks of the river Ganga and made the trees fruitful again.

During their fourteen-year long exile in the forest, Lord Rāma, Lakshmaṇa and Sīta visited Sage Atri's Āṣram. Anasūya instructed Sīta in the duties of a wife and gave her gifts including flowers that never wither, an auspicious body cream, and a sari. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Anāvu – Son of Yayāti and Ṣarmishṭha. *Bhāgavata*

Anāyu – Daughter of Dharaṇi and Daksha Prajāpati*. She was one of the wives of Kaṣyapa Prajāpati. Vikshara, Bala, Vṛta, and Vīra were their sons. *Mahā Bhārata*

Andhaka I – Son of Sātvati (*paternal aunt of Lord Kṛshṇa*). Bhujamāna, Kinkara, Ṣuchi and Kambaḷabarhi were his sons. *Bhāgavata*

Andhaka II – An Asura*. Son of Simhika and her husbnd Viprachitti. He performed Tapas* directed towards Lord Brahma

and obtained boons. Confident that the boons will keep him safe, he indulged in immoral actions and had his guards abduct beautiful women wherever he saw them. Once, hearing that Pārvati (*Consort of Lord Ṣiva*) was very beautiful, he sent his guards to capture and bring Her to him. When Lord Ṣiva went to earth for some reason, Andhaka went to Pārvati and threatened Her. Nandi (*the articulate bull Lord Ṣiva rides*) and Kāla Bhairava battled him but were defeated. Lord Vishṇu, who was in His female form spending some time with Pārvati (*His sister*), sent Ṣakti who chased Andhaka away. Lord Ṣiva then killed Andhaka. *Vishṇu Purāṇa*

Andhra – Son of Dṛshadaṣva, who was a son of Pṛthu. Andhra's son was Yuvanāṣva. *Brahmānḍa Purāṇa*

Āndhra – Son of Bali, who was the son of Sutapa. His brothers were Anga, Vanga, Kaḷinga, Simha and Pulinda. They ruled kingdoms in the eastern part of India. Āndhra's kingdom came to be known as Āndhra Dēṣa. *Bhāgavata*

Anēnasa I – Son of Kakutstha And father of Pṛthu. *Mahā Bhārata*

Anēnasa II – Son of Swarbhānavi and her husband Āyu. Brother of Nahusha. Ṣuddha was his son. *Mahā Bhārata*

Anga I – Son of Diviratha and grandson of Dadhivāhana. When Paraṣurāma (*sixth incarnation of Lord Vishṇu*) was systematically destroying Kshatriyas (*kings, members of the warrior caste*), Anga invited the Gods (*according to custom*) to a Yāga he was performing, to receive their portion of the Havya*. When they failed to attend the Yāga, he understood that he was ineligible

because he had no sons. Anga performed the Putra Kāmēshṭi Yāga*. A son, Vēnu, was born to him who hated all religious rites and was cruel, causing trouble for everyone. Unable to bear the ill repute his son's behaviour was causing, Anga left his kingdom, wife and son and was never seen again. *Mahā Bhārata*

Anga II – Son of Ūru (*also known as Ulmuka*). A king. His wife was Sunīdha. He gave away elephants and horses adorned with gold ornaments, donated gold to the needy and performed many Yāgas. He was devoted to God and Brahmins. *Vishṇu Purāṇa; Mahā Bhārata*

Anga Dēṣa – The area where the Sarayu and Ganga rivers merge. It got this name when, long ago, Manmatha's Anga (*limbs*), fell here as ashes when Lord Ṣiva destroyed Manmatha (*God of Love*) by opening his third eye (*angered because his meditation was disturbed by Manmatha hitting Him with his flower arrow to make Him fall in love with Pārvati*). *Rāmāyaṇa*

Angada I – Son of Lakshmaṇa (*Lord Rāma's younger brother*). Angada and his brother, Chandrakētu, were given the western countries of Rāma's empire to rule. Angada's city was called Angada Pura (*Pura, Sanskrit for 'city'*). *Rāmāyaṇa*

Angada II – A Vānara*. Son of Vāli. His mother was Tāra (*there was a rumour that he was the secret offspring of Mandōdari and Vāli*). Vāli's younger brother Sugrīva became the ruler of Kishkindha (*the kingdom of warrior monkeys that helped Rāma*) after Rāma killed Vāli. Angada was then made the crown prince. Angada was loyal to Sugrīva even though Sugrīva and Vāli were enemies and Sugrīva was instrumental in causing the death of Vāli.

Angada went south along with other Vānara warriors to search for Sīta (*Rāma's queen*). There he was informed by Sampāti (*an articulate bird*) that Sīta was abducted by Rāvaṇa and carried away to Lanka*. Angada then said that he can fly only one hundred miles and therefore, he was not confident of returning, even if he could make it to Lanka. Being afraid that if he returned without finding Sīta, Sugrīva would punish him, he decided to perform Prāyōpavēṣam* there. Jāmbavanta, a (*articulate*) bear, dissuaded him from starving to death by convincing him that Hanumān can cross the ocean and find Sīta.

Angada fought alongside Rāma during the war against Rāvaṇa. Rāma sent Angada as an emissary to Rāvaṇa to ask him to return Sīta to Rāma and stop hostilities. Rāvaṇa refused. During the subsequent war, Angada killed Rāvaṇa's commander Mahākāya. Hearing that Rāvaṇa was performing a Hōma* that would bestow divine powers on him, Rāma sent Angada and others to disrupt the Hōma and prevent its completion. Angada broke into Rāvaṇa's palace and dragged the grieving Mandōdari (*Rāvaṇa's queen, grieving for the death of her son, Indrajit*) by her hair to where Rāvaṇa was performing the Hōma. Enraged, Rāvaṇa stopped the performance of the Hōma (*thereby forfeiting the benefits from the Hōma*) and attacked the warrior Vānaras to rescue his queen. Following the successful conclusion of the Lanka war, Angada was crowned king of Kishkindha, Sugrīva having chosen to accompany Rāma to Ayōdhya. *Rāmāyaṇa*

On Rāma's command, Angada was born as a hunter at the time of Lord Vishṇu's incarnation as Kṛshṇa. He shot Kṛshṇa (*when Kṛshṇa decided to end the incarnation)* with an arrow in His big

toe and caused His death. Rāma's sin in killing Vāli without any provocation was expiated by ending the Kṛshṇa Avatāra in this manner (*appropriately at the hands of the son of Vāli himself*). (*Jagannātha Māhātmyam is a Sthala Purāṇa**.) *Jagannātha Māhātmyam*

Angada Pura – City built by Angada, son of Lakshmaṇa (*younger brother of Lord Rāma*). *Rāmāyaṇa*

Angana – Diggaja (*Each of the eight directions, North, Northeast, East, Southeast, South, Southwest, West, and Northwest, is guarded by one elephant. Together, they are called the Ashṭa Diggajas*) guarding the North. *Dēvī Bhāgavata*

Angarāja – Son of a king named Bali (*different from the Asura emperor during the Vāmana Avatāra*) and his wife Sudhēshṇa. In accordance with her husband's wish, she had a Kshētraja* son by a Sage named Dīrghatama. Angarāja became a king and ruled Anga Dēṣa. *Mahā Bhārata*

Angāraka I – One of Ekādaṣa (*eleven*) Rudras. *Mārkanḍēya Purāṇa*

Angāraka II – One of the nine Grahas (*celestial bodies or planets*). Once upon a time the earth, in love with Lord Vishṇu, took the form of a woman and pleaded with Him to fulfill her desire. Lord Vishṇu granted her wish. She emitted a seed in the form of a coral, from which Angāraka was born. - *Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa*

Once upon a time, a drop of sweat fell on the earth from Lord Vishṇu. A man with a metal body sprang from it. The man performed Tapas directed towards Lord Brahma who was pleased

by it and made the man a Graha named Angāraka (*Sanskrit name for the planet Mars*). *Padma Purāṇa*

After His consort Dākshāyaṇi immolated Herself, Lord Ṣiva was grieving. A drop of sweat fell from His body at that time. A son with a body of metal was born from it. That son was Angāraka. *Mārkaṇḍēya Purāṇa*

Angāraparṇa – A Gandharva*. A friend of Kubēra (*the God of Wealth*). Once, hearing their footfalls when the Pāṇḍavas were going through the forest where he lived towards the capital of Drupada's kingdom, he challenged them, shouting "Who are you? Why are you fearlessly going through my forest? Don't you know that this forest and this Ganga river belong to Angāraparṇa?" Arjuna replied "How can the river belong to you and not to whoever wishes to bathe in it? Do you think you can stop us from traversing this area?" Angāraparṇa then started raining arrows on Arjuna. Arjuna also took up his bow and returned fire. Arjuna defeated Angāraparṇa in the ensuing battle, and dragged him by his hair to Dharmarāja (*eldest of the Pāṇḍavas*). Angāraparṇa's wife came crying and pleaded with Dharmarāja to spare her husband's life. Dharmarāja took pity on her and released Angāraparṇa. Angāraparṇa then praised Arjuna's strength and heroism and seeking his friendship, taught him a magical power called "Chākshushi" and gave him magical horses as well. Angāraparṇa built himself a diamond-encrusted chariot to replace the one destroyed by the fire from Arjuna's arrows. Since his name was shamed due to his defeat by Arjuna, he changed his name to correspond with his new chariot and adopted the name "Chitraratha" (*one of the meanings of "Chitra" is amazing*). *Mahā*

Bhārata

Āngarishṭha – A king. He learnt the details of Dharma (*righteousness*), Artha (*material things*), Kāma (*desire*) and Mōksha (*or Mukti**) by questioning a Muni named Kāmandaka. *Mahā Bhārata*

Āngi – Wife of Arihu. Their son was Mahābhauma. *Mahā Bhārata*

Angira – (Also known as **Angirasa**). Son of Ulmuka and brother of Anga. His wife was Smṛti. *Bhāgavata*

Angirasa I – A Sage and mystic. *Chāndōgya Upanishad*

Angirasa II – A disciple of Pathya, he learnt the Atharva Vēda. *Bhāgavata*

Angirasa III – Son of Āgnēyi and Ūru. *Matsya Purāṇa*

Angirasa IV –Lord Brahma's Mānasa Putra (*mind-born son*). Once upon a time, Agni (*the God of Fire*) was upset, changed his form and started performing Tapas*. After a while, concerned that someone else might take over his position as the God of Fire (*it should be noted that many names such as Indra, Agni, etc., are actually positions which could be occupied by different individuals based on their qualifications and performance in the positions*), he stopped his Tapas. Just as he feared, Lord Brahma had replaced him by Angirasa as the God of Fire. Seeing how sad Agni was to lose his position, Angirasa offered to give the position back to Agni and be Agni's son. Angirasa's wife was Ṣiva (*also known as Sraddha*). Angirasa had sons named Bṛhatkīrti, Bṛhajyōti, Brahmadbrahma, Bṛhanmanasa, Bṛhaspati, Samvartana,

Utathya, Angirasa, Bṛhanmanta, and Bṛhadbhānu; and daughters named Bhānumati, Rāka, Sinīvāli, Guhuvu, Archishmati, Mahishmati, Mahāmati and Yōga Siddhi. *Mahā Bhārata*

Angirasas I – Grandsons of Ambarīsha, sons of Harita. They once went to the Nāga* world and were harassing the natives. Purukutsa, responding to the Nāgas' plea for help, drove the Angirasas away. *Vishṇu Purāṇa*

Angirasas II – Sages. Once, on the sixth day of a religious penance "Sattra Yāga", their minds blacked out and they could not think of the necessary actions. A man named Nābhāga taught them two principles that helped them. The Sages rewarded him with the fruits of their Yāga before going to heaven. *Mahā Bhārata*

Āngirasas – Kshetraja* sons of a Muni named Angirasa and the wife of Rathītara. They were considered descendants of Rathītara and were celebrated as brilliant scholars and Brahmins. *Bhāgavata*

Āngirasi – A Brahmin lady. Once, while she was having sex with her husband wishing for a son, Kalmāshapāda, who was an Asura* at the time, swallowed her husband. Grief-stricken, she gave the Asura a Ṣāpa* that when he sleeps with his wife, his head would explode. She softened her Ṣāpa, and told him that his lineage will survive through Sage Vasishṭha. She then immolated herself. *Bhāgavata*

Anīka – Younger brother of Vasudēva (*father of Lord Kṛshṇa*). *Bhāgavata*

Anila – One of the eight Vasus. Ṣākha, Viṣākha, and Naigama were his sons. *Matsya Purāṇa*

Anīla – Son of Kadruva. A Nāga*. *Mahā Bhārata*

Aniruddha – Son of Pradyumna (*son of Lord Kṛshṇa*); a very handsome man. He married Rukmi's grand-daughter (*his maternal uncle's daughter*), Rukmalōchana. Usha, daughter of an Asura* named Bāṇa, fell in love with him, having seen his handsome appearance in her dreams. Usha at that time had not actually seen him. Her friend and companion Chitrarēkha painted portraits of all the princes on earth. Usha pointed to Aniruddha's portrait and identified him as the one she had seen in her dreams. Chitrarēkha flew to Aniruddha's bedroom, abducted him while he was asleep and brought him to Usha's palace. Aniruddha woke up and saw Usha. They fell madly in love with each other and indulged in passionate love-making. Aniruddha stayed in Usha's Antahpura*. Usha became pregnant. Learning that an intruder was in his daughter's palace, Bāṇa had Aniruddha arrested. Pradyumna, who had sent his people to search for his missing son, learned from Sage Nārada of Aniruddha's predicament. Lord Kṛshṇa and His army attacked Bāṇa and defeated him. Bāṇa released Aniruddha from prison and performed Usha's marriage with him. A son named Vajra was born to Usha and Aniruddha. Aniruddha returned to Dwāraka with Usha and their son. Aniruddha had another son named Praja. *Bhāgavata*

Anjana I - A female Vānara*. Daughter of Kunjara. Vāyu (*the God of Wind*) once saw her relaxing in a garden and expressed his love and desire for her. He told her that, without her losing her virginity, he could give her a strong son who had the ability to become invisible when he wished. She agreed and let Vāyu make love to her. Ānjanēya *(another name of Hanumān*) was born to

her as a result. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Once, Lord Ṣiva saw Lord Vishṇu in His female form of Jaganmōhini and spontaneously ejaculated. The Dēvas, not wanting Lord Ṣiva's semen to be wasted, put it on a leaf and placed it in Anjana's ear. She gave birth to Ānjanēya as a result. *Ṣiva Purāṇa*

Anjana II – Diggaja (*Each of the eight directions, North, Northeast, East, Southeast, South, Southwest, West, and Northwest, is guarded by one elephant. Together, they are called the Ashṭa Diggajas*) guarding the west. *Dēvī Bhāgavata*

Anjanaparva – Son of Ghaṭōthkacha (*Bhīma's son by his Asura wife Hiḍimbi; each of the Pānḍavas had at least one wife he did not share with his brothers, in addition to Draupadi, shared by all five*). Aṣvatthāma killed him during the Mahā Bhārata war. *Bhāgavata*

Anjanāvati – Diggaja (*Each of the eight directions, North, Northeast, East, Southeast, South, Southwest, West, and Northwest, is guarded by one elephant. Together, they are called the Ashṭa Diggajas*) guarding the northeast. *Dēvī Bhāgavata*

Ānjanēya – (See **Hanumān)**. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Annapūrṇa – Consort of Kāṣi Viṣvēṣvara (*Lord Ṣiva, the most famous temple for whom is in Kāṣi**). *Hara Vilāsa*

Antardhāna – (*also known as Antarthi*) Son of King Pṛthu, he was nicknamed Vijitāṣva. *Mahā Bhārata*

Antardhāna had two wives, Ṣikhanḍi and Nabhasvati. His son by Nabhasvati was named Havirdhāna. *Vishṇu Purāṇa*

Antariksha – Son of Asura* named Mura whom Lord Kṛshṇa killed. *Bhāgavata*

Antisāra – Descendant of Pūru. Manasvini was his wife. Sumati and Apratiratha were their sons. *Bhāgavata*

Anuhlāda – Son of Hiraṇyakaṣipu. His wife was Sūrmi. They had sons named Bāshkala and Mahisha. *Matsya Purāṇa; Bhāgavata*

Aṇuhu – Son of Vibhrāja. He married Kīrtimati, daughter of Ṣakuni (*uncle of Duryōdhana*). *Mahā Bhārata*

Anukampana – An Asura*. Rāvaṇa's servant. He brought to Rāvaṇa the news that Rāma had killed Khara and Dūshaṇa and had humiliated Ṣūrpaṇakha. He was also the one who advised Rāvaṇa that if he abducts Sīta, Rāma would die in sorrow and that Lakshmaṇa would also perish. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Anupadēva – Akrūra's second son. *Bhāgavata*

Anūra – Son of Vinata and and her husband Kaṣyapa. Concerned that her Sapatni* Kadruva's eggs all broke and her children emerged, but hers had still not broken, Vinata poked a hole in one of her eggs. A son with his lower limbs not yet fully formed, emerged. Angry with his mother at being hurriedly forced out of the egg before his body had fully developed, he gave her a Ṣāpa* that she would be a slave to her Sapatni for a thousand years. He also commanded his mother not to touch her second egg until her son emerges from it. He went away and assumed a position as the chariot-driver of Sūrya (*the Sun God*). His wife was Ṣyēni. Sampāti and Jaṭāyu were his sons (*huge, articulate, birds*). *Mahā Bhārata*

Anusālva – Younger brother of Sālva. Upset that Kṛshṇa killed Sālva, he wanted to kill Kṛshṇa and was waiting for an opportunity. Imagining that if he captured Dharmarāja's horse in the Aṣvamēdha Yāga*, Kṛshṇa would come to retrieve the horse and he could kill Him then, he did capture the horse. Vṛshakētu came for the horse instead, defeated and bound Anusālva, took him to Kṛshṇa and made him do obeisance to Kṛshṇa. *Bhāgavata*

Āpa I – One of the eight Vasus. His sons were Ṣānta, Danḍa and Maṇivaktra. *Matsya Purāṇa*

Āpa II – An Agni (*fire*). His wife was Mudita. Their son was Adbhuta. Āpa used to carry their Havya* to the Dēvas. After a while, he got tired of this task and handing it over to Atharva, he hid in the sea. The Dēvas went searching for him. Fish revealed his hiding place to them. Āpa, angry with the fish, gave them a Ṣāpa* that people will kill them. The Dēvas requested him to continue his former task, but he did not want to do it and left his body. Minerals such as sulfur came from his body. *Mahā Bhārata*

Apāntaratama – Mind-born son of Lord Vishṇu. After the Vēdas emerged from Lord Brahma's faces, Lord Vishṇu created him and said to him, "O! Son! Vēda Vyāsa (*Vēda Vyāsa is not anyone's name. It is a position occupied by a different individual in each epoch responsible for codifying and preserving the Vēdas*)! Listen to the Vēdas attentively and compile them. That will please me." *Mahā Bhārata*

Aparājita I – Son of Chākshusha Manu*. *Matsya Purāṇa*

Aparājita II – Son of Kadruva. A Nāga*. *Mahā Bhārata*

Aparṇa – One of the names of Pārvati. Ēkaparṇa and Ēkapāṭala were her siblings. The three of them performed Tapas*. Aparṇa completely stopped eating food. Her mother said to her, gently, "U, mā", ("*do not*"). Uma thus became one of Pārvati's names. *Hari Vamṣa*

Āpastamba – A Ṛshi (*synonym for Muni or Sage*). He formalized the rules for the rituals described in the Yajurvēda. *Brahma Purāṇa*

Apava – A Sage. The forest where he lived was granted by Hayahaya to Sūrya (*the Sun God*) as food. Apava's Āṣram was destroyed when Sūrya consumed the forest. Apava angrily gave Hayahaya a Ṣāpa that Balarāma would cut off his thousand arms and kill him. *Matsya Purāṇa*

Apratiratha – Son of Antisāra and father of Kaṇva (*Sage who raised Ṣakuntala*). *Bhāgavata*

Āpravāna – Son of Sage Chyavana and husband of Ṛchi. They had a son named Aurva. *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*

Apsarasas – Apsaras* (*Apsara and Apsarasa are synonyms*) were born when the ocean of milk was churned.

Apsaras are beautiful and talented divine women who entertain the Dēvas with music and dance in Indra's* Sabha (*court*). Rambha, Ūrvaṣi, Mēnaka, Tilōttama, and Ghṛtāchi are the more prominent Apsaras. They never marry. When great Sages perform Tapas*, Indra has been known to send one of them to distract the Sages and disrupt their Tapas (*due to his fear of being replaced as Indra*). *Bhāgavata*

Araja – Daughter of Ṣukra (*the Guru of the Asuras**). While she was roaming in the forest, a cruel man named Danḍa assaulted and raped her. On her father's advice, she stayed in that forest and was performing Tapas*. Due to Ṣukra's Ṣāpa*, Danḍa's kingdom was overwhelmed by a rain of mud. The mud did not cover her or the animals in her vicinity. *Uttara Rāmāyaṇa*

Archi – A woman born when the arms of Vēnu (*a vicious king who was harassing Brahmins*) were churned. She was born with attributes of Goddess Lakshmi. King Pṛthu married her. Vijitāṣva, Dhūmrakēṣa, Haryaṣva, Draviṇa, and Vṛka were their sons. *Mahā Bhārata*

Ardhanārīṣwara – Once upon a time, unhappy that propagation of the species was not proceeding well, Lord Brahma performed Tapas* directed toward Ardhanārīṣwara (*Ṣiva in His half-female form*) who appeared and assured Him that His wish will be fulfilled and commanded His female half to separate Herself from Him. Lord Brahma saluted with a Namaskāra* the separated form of Ṣakti. Lord Ṣiva asked Her to be born as the daughter of Daksha Prajāpati*. *Ṣiva Purāṇa*

Ariha – Son of Avāchīna and husband of Angi. Their son was Mahā Bhauma. *Mahā Bhārata*

Arindama – A king. Father of Dama. *Ṣiva Purāṇa*

Arishṭa – An Asura*. Taking the form of a bull, he was harassing the cows in Gōkul. Lord Kṛshṇa killed him. *Vishṇu Purāṇa*

Arishṭanēmi – A Prajāpati*. He instructed Sagara on the path to Mukti*. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Arjuna I – After the birth of Dharmarāja and Bhīma, King Pānḍu performed Tapas* directed towards Indra* and asked his wife Kunti to have a Kshētraja* son by Indra. Arjuna was the son of Kunti and Indra. (*Shortly after he married Kunti and Mādri, King Pānḍu incurred the wrath of a Sage who gave him a Ṣāpa* that if he has intercourse with one of his wives, he will die. As it happens, his wife Kunti had a boon from Sage Durvāsa that any Dēva she 'thinks of'* while chanting a Mantra he taught her, will come to her and give her a son without her virginity being violated. This boon was used by Kunti to conceive Dharmarāja by Yama, Bhīma by Vāyu and Arjuna by Indra. Kunti taught the Mantra to Mādri who birthed twin sons Nakula and Sahadēva by the twin Aṣvinī Dēvas. Per the custom of the day, because their mothers were the wives of King Pānḍu, the sons of Kunti and Mādri were known as Pānḍavas, or sons of Pānḍu, even though King Pānḍu was not their father.*) At the time of his birth, a voice from the sky proclaimed that he would be named Arjuna because he would be more valiant than Kārtavīrya (*Arjuna*). After the death of King Pānḍu, Kunti took her and Mādri's sons (*Mādri having also died*) to Hastināpura (*the capital of the Kaurava empire*). There they were being educated along with Duryōdhana and his brothers. Impressed with his proficiency in archery, the archery Guru Drōṇa taught Arjuna the means of breaking through and out of intricate Vyūhas*. This caused both Karṇa and Aṣvatthāma (*son of Drōṇa*) to be jealous of Arjuna.

Aṣvatthāma gave instructions to the dining hall manager to never let Arjuna eat in the dark. One night, the lamp went out while Arjuna was dining. He managed to finish his dinner using his prior

knowledge of the location of dishes, cutlery etc. He realized then that he could train himself to perform other activities including archery without having to see his targets. He proceeded to practice archery in the dark and with his eyes closed during the day. Arjuna demonstrated special aptitude for accuracy in archery from his childhood. Once, Drōṇa set up an artificial bird on a tree and told all his students that they had to hit the bird's head with an arrow. When he asked each of his students what they saw, Dharmarāja and others mentioned many objects including the people around. Arjuna, with his intense concentration, said he saw the head of the bird and nothing else. Once, when Drōṇa stepped into a lake to bathe, a crocodile caught hold of his leg. Arjuna was able to free him. When his disciples completed their education, Drōṇa asked of them as Guru Dakshiṇa* to defeat, capture and bring to him King Drupada. The other disciples including Duryōdhana, underestimating the difficulty of the task set for them, tried but were defeated by Drupada. Arjuna, after carefully studying Drupada's strengths, took an army commanded by his older brother Bhīma and the flanks protected by the twins Nakula and Sahadēva, defeated and brought Drupada to his Guru. Drōṇa was greatly pleased and taught Arjuna a very powerful weapon named Brahmaṣira and stipulated only that Arjuna not use it against him (*in the war that Drōṇa knew to be unavoidable between the Kauravas and Pānḍavas in which he must fight on behalf of the Kauravas, his benefactors and employers*).

Arjuna, along with his mother and brothers, went to Vāraṇāsi (*present-day Benares*) and endured many difficulties, living in the wax house (*which Duryōdhana got built for them so he could*

burn it down while they were asleep and kill them; the plot was foiled by Bhīma) and in the forest. While travelling through the forest, he was challenged by the Gandharva* Angāraparṇa, defeated him, won his friendship and obtained many valuable gifts. Disguised as Brahmins, the Pāṇḍavas went to King Drupada's Sabha (*court*). A Swayamvara* was announced for the hand of Drupada's daughter Draupadi. A test called a Matsya Yantra (*meaning fish machine*) was set up, consisting of a spinning wheel high over the floor with a small artificial fish attached to a point on the wheel. A pool of water was on the floor below the wheel. The test was to hit the fish while looking at the reflection in the pool, not directly at the fish. Arjuna stood among the group of Brahmins, looking at the princes attempting to hit the fish on the Matsya Yantra. After all the princes failed in the test, and after receiving a signal of approval from his eldest brother Dharmarāja, Arjuna hit the fish and succeeded in the Swayamvara test. Draupadi put a garland of flowers on Arjuna's neck, signifying her acceptance of him as her husband. Arjuna and Bhīma defeated the princes who attacked Arjuna out of jealousy that a Brahmin (*not really, just in disguise*) had succeeded in an endeavor at which they had all failed. Arjuna and Bhīma took Draupadi home and shouted to their mother while they were still outside the house and not visible to her, "We brought Bhiksha (*alms*)". Kunti, not knowing what they got as Bhiksha, asked that the five of them share equally whatever they received. Arjuna was surprised at his mother's direction. Remembering Sage Vyāsa's advice that they should always obey their mother, the five of them married Draupadi. They stayed in King Drupada's city for some time. The

propriety of the five of them marrying the same woman did worry Dharmarāja but Arjuna did not burden himself about it.

After a while the Pāṇḍavas and Draupadi went to Hastināpura. Dharmarāja was made crown prince. Arjuna was one of his close and trusted associates. Sage Nārada came and helped establish a protocol to avoid problems among the five brothers with respect to their shared wife Draupadi. Each brother lived with her as the husband for a year in each five year period. Once, while it was Dharmarāja's turn to be Draupadi's husband, a Brahmin came and complained to Arjuna that his sacrificial animals had been stolen. On his way to the armory, Arjuna could not avoid seeing Draupadi and Dharmarāja together. In accordance with the procedures set up by Sage Nārada, Arjuna had to go on pilgrimage for a year for violating the stricture against seeing one of his brothers with Draupadi. As soon as he recovered the Brahmin's sacrificial animals, Arjuna left on his pilgrimage.

Once, while Arjuna was bathing in the Ganga river, a princess of the Nāga* people named Ulūchi saw him, fell in love with him and carried him away to her palace. After he satisfied her desires, Arjuna continued on his pilgrimage and entered a city named Maṇipura. There he married the princess named Chitrāngada (*each of the Pāṇḍavas had at least one wife he did not share with his brothers, in addition to Draupadi, shared by all five*). He and Chitrāngada had a son named Babhruvāhana. While bathing in a lake named Panchāpsara, he released an alligator there from her Ṣāpa. He then went to Dwāraka to see Lord Kṛshṇa. He fell in love with Kṛshṇa's younger sister Subhadra, and in order to be close to her, took up position on a hill named Raivataka, disguised as a Yati

(*a holy man or saint*). Balarāma, Kṛshṇa's older brother, thought he was really a Yati and assigned Subhadra to attend to his needs. Lord Kṛshṇa, aware that they were in love with each other, performed his sister's marriage with Arjuna while His brother was away and sent the couple to Indraprastha. Arjuna and Subhadra had a son named Abhimanyu.

Once, while Kṛshṇa and Arjuna were in the vicinity of the Khāṇḍava forest, Agni (*the Fire God*) approached them disguised as a Brahmin. He told them that he needed food and desired to consume the Khāṇḍava forest. In order that they be able to fight off even Indra if he interfered, Agni prayed to Varuṇa (*the Rain God*) and obtained the great bow named Gāṇḍīva for Arjuna. Agni then consumed the Khāṇḍava forest. When Indra came to protect the forest, Kṛshṇa and Arjuna defeated him. Indra subsequently became their friend. Arjuna saved an Asura* named Maya (*architect to the Asuras*) who was trapped in the forest.

Agni, pleased and grateful to Arjuna for his help in letting him consume the Khāṇḍava forest, gave Arjuna a special chariot. Arjuna rode this chariot throughout the Mahā Bhārata war. Kṛshṇa prevented the arrows shot by great warriors including Drōṇa and Karṇa from damaging Arjuna's chariot. As soon as the war ended, Kṛshṇa asked Arjuna to dismount from the chariot. The moment Arjuna dismounted, the chariot was burnt down by the arrows which had earlier hit it.

Arjuna's chariot was normally driven by Rukma (*Rukmi*). During the Mahā Bhārata war Lord Kṛshṇa drove Arjuna's chariot (*by special request*). The mascot on the flag on Arjuna's chariot was a Kapi (*monkey*). His conch (*each great warrior had a conch*

with a distinct sound, which they used to announce their arrival on the battlefield) was named Dēvadatta.

When Dharmarāja set about performing the Rājasūya Yāga*, Arjuna went on the campaign of conquest, defeated the kings of Puḷinda, Barbara, Gāndhāra, Kāmbhōja, and Turushka kingdoms and brought emormous wealth as booty to the treasury. Arjuna was totally unaware, through this process of expansion and enrichment of their kingdom, that his Kaurava cousins were consumed by jealousy at his achievements and were planning constantly to undermine his power by deceit. It did not occur to him that this might be so, because he himself never had a crooked thought. Arjuna never worried whether an action was proper or not. He just obeyed his older brother Dharmarāja's commands unquestioningly. He was a clearer thinker than his other older brother Bhīma and a man of peace. When their cousins invited Dharmarāja to games of chance (*with dice*), he did not suspect that the games (*and the dice used*) were rigged and crooked. He did not utter even a single word of criticism or complaint when Dharmarāja wagered and lost the kingdom, all their wealth (*won primarily by Arjuna's conquests*), and the freedom of himself, his brothers and Draupadi. When Draupadi was humiliated (*by being dragged into the royal court and stripped of her clothing*), he stood looking down, observing the terms of the agreement between Dharmarāja and Duryōdhana. He suppressed his manly instincts and did not criticize Duṣṣāsana for trying to strip Draupadi's clothing (*prevented only by Lord Kṛshṇa's magical remote intervention*).

Having lost their kingdom, the Pāṇḍavas went into the forest. (*the wager the Pāṇḍavas lost required them to spend twelve years*

of exile in the forest - Araṇyavāsa, and one year incognito – Agjnātavāsa. If they were exposed during that year, they had to repeat the whole twelve plus one year exile. Ṣakuni, uncle of the Kauravas, made absolutely certain that the Pānḍavas would lose by using his father's bones as the dice, which would always give Ṣakuni the numbers he called.) Arjuna did not worry about losing the kingdom. Unlike Bhīma and Draupadi, though, he did not argue with Dharmarāja about finding ways to regain power. He learnt a technique named Pratismṛti and on Dharmarāja's advice, performed Tapas directed towards Lord Ṣiva. Lord Ṣiva disguised himself as a hunter and came to the Āṣram where Arjuna was performing Tapas, chasing a wild boar. Intending to test Arjuna, He challenged him for the right to the boar's carcass. Arjuna fought the hunter with courage. Lord Ṣiva was pleased with Arjuna and gave him a mighty weapon named Pāṣupatāstra and left. Happy that his son achieved such an honour, Indra took Arjuna to his heavenly abode by chariot. Dēvas and Mahā Ṛshis, knowing that Arjuna in his previous birth was a Mahā Ṛshi named Nara, honoured him. One of the Apsaras*, Ūrvaṣi, fell in love with him and asked him to make love to her. She became angry when Arjuna refused and gave him a Ṣāpa that he would become a eunuch (*which helped Arjuna during the incognito period to act as a dance teacher to royal ladies*). On his way back to the forest to rejoin his brothers and Draupadi, he killed many Asuras*.

Once, Duryōdhana came to the forest where the Pānḍavas were spending their exile, and was captured and imprisoned by a Gandharva* named Chitrāṣva. Arjuna battled and defeated the Gandharva and rescued Duryōdhana. Once, as Draupadi was

walking in the forest, Saindhava (*brother-in-law and a close ally of Duryōdhana*) attempted to sexually assault her. Arjuna defeated him and protected Draupadi. Once, as the Pāṇḍavas were thirsty while walking in the forest, the twins Nakula and Sahadēva went to fetch drinking water from a nearby lake. When they did not return even after a long time, Arjuna went looking for them. He found them lying unconscious near a lake. Hearing questions posed by a disembodied voice, and unable to answer them, Arjuna also lost consciousness and fell near his younger brothers. Dharmarāja eventually came by, answered the questions, revived his brothers and returned to their path. At the end of the twelve-year exile in the forest, Arjuna, his brothers and Draupadi went to Virāṭanagar to spend their year incognito. Ūrvaṣi's Ṣāpa stood him in good stead at this time. As a eunuch named Bṛhannala, he became the dance teacher for King Virāṭa's daughter Uttara. During the king's absence from his capital, Duryōdhana learned from spies that the Pāṇḍavas might be in that kingdom. The Kauravas with their army, came to steal Virāṭa's cattle, his most prized property. Bṛhannala went to battle as Prince Uttara's chariot driver. Prince Uttara became frightened at the sight of the Kaurava army and asked Bṛhannala to drive the chariot back home. Arjuna reassured the prince, and with his bow Gāṇḍīva in hand, fought and defeated the Kaurava army. The year for which the Pāṇḍavas had to remain incognito had just ended. Bhīshma expressed admiration for Arjuna's courage. As the Pāṇḍavas had completed the agreed-upon terms of their exile, they all resumed their original forms. King Virāṭa recognised and praised the Pāṇḍavas and offered his daughter in marriage to Arjuna. Arjuna summoned his

son Abhimanyu and other relatives and got Princess Uttara married to Abhimanyu instead. At the same time, the assembled relatives and well-wishers held discussions on how the Pāṇḍavas should now deal with the Kauravas.

Dharmarāja preferred a peaceful solution involving a treaty with the Kauravas. Arjuna agreed with his older brother. But the Kauravas, contrary to the agreement at the time of the games of chance, did not want to relinquish any part of the kingdom they had won (*by foul means*). War appeared inevitable. Arjuna went to request Lord Kṛshṇa for his help. Duryōdhana who reached there earlier, finding Kṛshṇa fast asleep, sat behind (*above, due to his vanity as the Kaurava emperor*) Kṛshṇa's head. Arjuna, typically modest, sat at Kṛshṇa's feet. Kṛshṇa, 'waking up', saw Arjuna first and noticed Duryōdhana's presence later. Kṛshṇa told the two of them to choose between Him (*it was understood that He would provide only moral support and advice, not active fighting*) and His vast army. He asked Arjuna to choose first. Arjuna chose Kṛshṇa and Duryodhana gladly agreed to take Kṛshṇa's army. The Pāṇḍava army reached Kuru Kshētra, the designated battlefield, prepared and eager to fight. Kṛshṇa became the driver of Arjuna's chariot. The Kaurava army also reached Kuru Kshētra. When he saw the Kaurava army, Arjuna felt sad that for the sake of winning their power back, he would have to kill so many relatives and friends. Lord Kṛshṇa re-motivated him by showing Arjuna His Viṣva Rūpa (*His form as the Universe itself*) and teaching him the Bhagavad Gīta.

The war began. Bhīshma was leading the Kaurava army as their first commander-in-chief. Arjuna faced him first. When Bhīshma

saw Ṣikhanḍi (See **Amba**) on Arjuna's chariot, he disarmed unilaterally, was injured by Arjuna's arrows, left the battle and retired to a bed of arrows. Arjuna saluted him with a Namaskāra* and shooting an arrow into the ground, created a fountain of pure water (*Bhīshma's mother, Ganga herself*) to quench his thirst. Later he fought the Samṣaptakas and Bhagadatta. The next day, after fighting the Samṣaptakas again and defeating them, he noticed bad omens on his way back to meet his brothers, and was informed of the tragic death of his son Abhimanyu. On learning that Saindhava was instrumental in his son's demise, he publicly vowed that if he did not kill Saindhava before sunset the next day, he would kill himself. Kaurava warriors including Duryōdhana were protecting Saindhava. Arjuna was fighting fiercely against great warriors including Kṛtavarma and Ṣrutāyu. Saindhava, however, was nowhere to be seen. Kṛpa (*Drōṇa's brother-in-law*), Aṣvatthāma, Ṣalya and Vṛshasēna were blocking him. Kṛshṇa then used his Chakra to create an artificial sunset. The Kauravas, believing that Arjuna, having failed to kill Saindhava will now kill himself, let their guard down and were moving about freely. Kṛshṇa showed Arjuna where Saindhava was and removed the artificial sunset. Arjuna promptly decapitated Saindhava. Drōṇa also was killed with the use of a ruse. Arjuna killed a king named Daṇḍadhāra, ten sons of the Kaurava princes, and Vṛshasēna. Karṇa became the next commander-in-chief of the Kaurava forces. Karṇa, right from the start, wanted to excel Arjuna. The two fought fiercely but inconclusively. Rather than finishing the battle with Karṇa, Arjuna went to the Pāṇḍava camp to see how Dharmarāja and the others were doing. Dharmarāja abused Arjuna and asked

him why he returned without killing Karṇa. Angered at this, Arjuna raised his sword vowing to kill Dharmarāja. Kṛshṇa stopped Arjuna and suggested that Arjuna abuse Dharmarāja verbally and that would be equivalent to killing Dharmarāja and would allow Arjuna to fulfill his vow. Arjuna did so, calmed down and realizing that he behaved inappropriately, prepared to commit suicide. Kṛshṇa again intervened, stopped what would have resulted in victory for the Kauravas, and said that self-praise was equivalent to suicide and Arjuna should do that and move on with the war. Arjuna returned to the battlefield and engaged Karṇa using the many magical weapons he obtained from Indra and other Dēvas. Karṇa, who also possessed many magical weapons, deployed one named Sarpamukhāstra against Arjuna. Kṛshṇa turned Arjuna's chariot in an evasive maneuver so that the weapon missed Arjuna's neck and instead knocked his crown to the ground.

The crown was a reward given to Indra by Lord Brahma for his Tapas. When Arjuna killed Asuras named Nivātakavachas, Indra praised him and presented him this crown. No one had been able to knock it down since Arjuna first wore it on his head. After knocking his crown to the ground, the weapon was poised to attack Arjuna again but Arjuna destroyed it.

As the battle wore on, Karṇa was growing weaker and less confident and his chariot was sinking into the ground due to the Ṣāpas he had received and the harassment by his chariot-driver Ṣalya. Arjuna finally killed him.

The Pāṇḍavas eventually won the war and Dharmarāja ascended to the throne. Dharmarāja then performed the Aṣvamēdha Yāga*.

Arjuna, following the horse, defeated the kings of Trigarta, Gāndhāra and Sindhu, each of whom had attempted to capture the horse.

Hearing that his father Arjuna would follow the horse, Babhruvāhana (*Arjuna's son by Chitrāngada*) went up to him to greet him with respect. Arjuna looked askance at him. (*The protocols of Aṣvamēdha did not include friendly encounters between princes. If a king was not prepared to capture the horse and challenge the performer of the Aṣvamēdha, he must stay away.*) Arjuna pointed out that a king should capture a horse if it enters his kingdom and should not behave in an unmanly way. Crestfallen, Babhruvāhana was returning home. Ulūchi (*Arjuna's wife, of the serpent people*) came from Nāga Lōka, announced who she was and told Babhruvāhana that Arjuna wished to fight him. Persuaded by her words, Babhruvāhana shot an arrow at Arjuna. Arjuna fell to the ground lifeless. Ulūchi and Chitrāngada approached the body. Chitrāngada, crying bitterly, requested Ulūchi to revive him. Ulūchi brought Sanjīvani (*a magical herb with the power to revive the dead*) and gave it to Babhruvāhana who put it on his father's heart. Arjuna was revived.

For the sin of hiding behind Ṣikhanḍi to fight and cause the death of Bhīshma, the Vasus (*Bhīshma was an incarnation of the eighth and youngest of the Vasus*) were considering giving Arjuna a Ṣāpa that he would be condemned to hell (*somewhat ironic in view of the fact that facing a Ṣāpa that they all be born on earth, all but the youngest extracted a promise from their mother-to-be, Ganga, that she would drown them immediately after birth, which she did, much to their father's regret*). Ulūchi, overhearing them

planning to give her husband a terrible Ṣāpa, related that news to her father. When her father pleaded with the Vasus for a means for Arjuna to be cleared from the Ṣāpa, they told him that if Arjuna fought his own son, he would be saved from the Ṣāpa. Ulūchi explained that that was the reason why she encouraged Babhruvāhana to fight Arjuna and gave him the will and strength to do so.

Arjuna married Pramīla (*queen of a race of amazon-like women*) who captured the horse. Arjuna finally led the sacrificial horse safely to Hastināpura. Dharmarāja completed the Aṣvamēdha Yāga and ruled the kingdom for many years. Arjuna was one of his close aides. The Yādava (*cowherd dynasty*) men incurred the wrath and Ṣāpa of a Sage and were destroyed. Kṛshṇa, unable to watch his people destroying themselves, decided to go away to the forest and summoned Arjuna.

When Arjuna reached Dwāraka, Balarāma and Kṛshṇa had already left the city. Vasudēva (*Kṛshṇa's father*) informed Arjuna that Kṛshṇa left a message that Arjuna should protect the remnants of the Yādava people (*mostly women, children and the very old*), and saddened by the plight of his people, passed away. Arjuna performed the religious funeral rites for Vasudēva and the other dead Yādavas. Explaining that he could not bear to stay in Dwāraka without Kṛshṇa and revealing that he had learned that Dwāraka itself would soon be engulfed by the ocean, Arjuna invited everyone to come to Indraprastha. He proceeded on the route taken by Kṛshṇa and His brother, hoping to meet with them. A hunter told Arjuna that he had seen Kṛshṇa and agreed to lead him to where He had gone. Arjuna came upon the dead bodies of

Kṛshṇa and His brother and fainted with grief at the sight. When he regained consciousness, he cremated the bodies in accordance with the religious rites.

He returned to Dwāraka and began to lead all those remaining there to Indraprastha. On the way some hunters attacked them and robbed them. Arjuna did not have the strength to resist them the way he would have done in the past. He then informed Rukmiṇi and the other wives of Kṛshṇa of the passing of Kṛshṇa and Balarāma. They immolated themselves. Arjuna split leadership of the remaining Yādava forces among Kṛtavarma's son, Sātyaki's son and Vajra (*Usha and Aniruddha's son*) and crowned them as kings. He then went to Vēda Vyāsa and informed him of the disaster that overcame the Yādavas. Vyāsa consoled Arjuna and informed him that Kṛshṇa decided to end his Avatāra (*incarnation*) and returned to Vaikunṭha. Arjuna then returned to Indraprastha and related to Dharmarāja what Vyāsa had told him. They noticed signs that Kali Yuga (*fourth in the cycle of epochs, with Dharma less stable in each Yuga than in the earlier ones; by Kali Yuga, evil has the upper hand*) had arrived. They crowned Parīkshit (*son of Abhimanyu and Uttara*) as the king and proceeded to the Mēru mountain.

Ulūchi returned to Nāga Lōka. Chitrāngada joined her son Babhruvāhana. The other wives of the Pāṇḍavas and the widows of the Upapāṇḍavas stayed in the capital with Parīkshit. As they proceeded towards Mēru, first Draupadi, then Nakula and Sahadēva and finally Arjuna fell dead. Arjuna fell because he slighted all other archers and bragged that he would kill all Kauravas in battle on one day, which he failed to do. *Mahā*

Bhārata

Arjuna II – Son of Dharmavyādha. He was a hunter. When a serpent bit the son of a Brahmin woman named Gautami, he offered to kill the serpent. *Mahā Bhārata*

Arjuniki – Daughter of a meat-seller named Dharmavyādha. She was married to Prasanna, son of Sage Matanga. One day, when her mother-in-law called her, she did not respond because she could not hear the call. Her mother-in-law got angry and abusive and said "You are the daughter of someone who kills and eats animals. How can you be more sensible than this?" Arjuniki, angered at hearing these insults, went back to her father's house and related to him her mother-in-law's words. Her parents took her back to her husband's house. Dharmavyādha, when he was invited to have dinner before he left, asked what he would be served. Sage Matanga's wife showed him the pulses and wheat she planned to cook. He said "Alas! You kill and eat these thousands of creatures every day? I will not eat such food." He explained that it was not proper for them to criticize his daughter and left. *Varāha Purāṇa*

Arshṭishēṇa – A Sage. The Pānḍavas stayed for a while in his Āṣram during their exile. *Mahā Bhārata*

Ārshṭishēṇa – A king. His wife was Jaya. They had a son named Bhara. When the son came of age, Ārshṭishēṇa crowned him king and went away to the banks of the river Ganga with his wife. While he was performing a Yāga, an Asura* named Mithu carried away him, his wife and the Ṛtvija* to the netherworld. Dēvāpi, son of the Ṛtvija, rescued all of them and brought them back from the netherworld. *Brahmānḍa Purāṇa*

Arthapati – A king of the Nishadha kingdom. He gave his daughter in marriage to Atithi, a king of the Raghu dynasty. Their son was Nishadha. *Raghu Vamṣa*

Arthi – Son of the Emperor Pṛthu and husband of Ṣikhanḍini. They had a son named Havirdhāna. *Brahmānḍa Purāṇa; Brahma Purāṇa*

Aruṇa I – A Brahmin. Father of Ṣvētakētu. He taught his son the Vēdas and Vēdāngas. Ṣvētakētu went to the Sabha (*court*) of Pravahaṇa, a king of the Pānchāla dynasty. Ṣvētakētu thought he was a scholar**.** Wanting to disabuse him of his notion, the king asked a series of questions: "Where do those who have only done good deeds and died, go from this world? By what means will those who went to the afterlife to enjoy their rewards return here? Since those going to the afterlife having done good deeds (*only*) and those who have performed devoted worship initially take the same route, where do their paths diverge? With people leaving constantly for the afterlife, why do not the worlds they go to become overpopulated?" Unable to answer any of these questions, Ṣvētakētu went to his father and said to him: "You said you educated me. I was unable to answer any of these questions. Why did you not teach me these things?" The father told him that he would have taught those things if he had known them himself, and went to the king. The king offered him wealth but Aruṇa refused wealth and requested the king to teach him the answers to the questions the king had asked his son. He learnt these matters from the king. *Chāndōgya Upanishad*

Aruṇa II – Son of Haryaṣva and grandson of Anaraṇya. His son

was Tribandhana. *Bhāgavata*

Aruṇa III – Son of Asura* named Mura. *Bhāgavata*

Aruṇāspada – A city on the banks of the Ganga river. Pravarākhya lived there. *Mārkanḍēya Purāṇa*

Aruṇāṣva – Second son of Barhiṇāṣva. *Dēvī Bhāgavata*

Arundhati – Arundhati was the daughter of Dēvahūti and Kardama Prajāpati*. Sage Vasishṭha took her as his wife. All the Ṛshis blessed her and gave her boons such as long married life and being a great Pativrata*. She had several sons including one named Ṣivaṣakti.

Once upon a time, Agni saw the wives of the the Saptarshis* and felt lust for them. Discovering this, his wife Swāha took the form of each Ṛshi's wife and approached her husband, who had sex with her thinking she was the wife of one of the Ṛshis. Swāha was, however, unable to take the form of Arundhati, due to the power of Arundhati's Pātivratya (*being a Pativrata*).

She eventually became a star and is next to Vasishṭha in the night sky. She is pointed out to newlyweds during the wedding ceremony. People about to die will be unable to see the Arundhati star. *Mahā Bhārata*

Aruṇi I – Lord Brahma's son, born from His nostril. *Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa*

Aruṇi II – Father of Uddālaka. *Chāndōgya Upanishad*

Aruṇi III – A Sage. While he was engrossed in Tapas*, a Bhil (*wild tribal man*) came up to him and threatened to kill him. Even after hearing him, Aruṇi kept meditating on God and did not

move. Surprised, the Bhil thought to himself, "Even though I have killed many people and seen many people, I have never seen someone who was so unmoved, so unafraid of death, and so immersed in meditation." He told Aruṇi that he would give up his sinful ways and requested the Sage to teach him the way to attain Mukti*. Aruṇi, without responding to the Bhil, stood up and left. The Bhil followed him and started serving him like a disciple. On their way, a tiger attacked them and was about to kill Aruṇi. The Bhil killed the tiger. Grateful, Aruṇi told the Bhil to always speak the truth, and if he found a fragment of a fruit, not to eat it. The Bhil became known as Satyatapa. *Varāha Purāṇa*

Arvāvasu – Oldest son of Raibhya. Parāvasu was his brother. Both brothers were proficient in the Vēdas. They were the Vēdic priests in the Sabha (*court*) of King Bṛhadyumna. Parāvasu unknowingly, in the dark, killed his father. Arvāvasu performed Hōmas* to absolve his brother of the sin of killing a Brahmin. After performing the required Prāyaṣchitta (*atonement*) for the sin, Arvāvasu went back to King Bṛhadyumna's Yāga. Parāvasu, who was acting as the priest at the king's Yāga, told the king not to allow Arvāvasu to enter the Yāga hall because Arvāvasu had to perform severe rites of atonement prior to becoming eligible to enter the Yāga hall. Arvāvasu revealed that it was Parāvasu and not he that committed the sin and that he had already done what was needed for absolution. The Dēvas, pleased with his truthfulness, asked him to name the boons he wanted. Arvāvasu requested them to revive Raibhya, Avakrīta (*who was killed by Raibhya*), and Avakrīta's father Bharadvāja. The Dēvas granted his wish. *Mahā Bhārata*

Āryaka – A Nāga* king. Garutmanta* (*a natural enemy of serpents*) killed his son Chikuru and threatened to kill his grandson Sumukha. While Āryaka was grieving for his loss and the threat against his grandson, Mātali (*Indra's* chariot-driver*) approached him and proposed marriage between Sumukha and his daughter. Āryaka replied that Sumukha will not live long because Garutmanta was going to kill him and therefore, he will not let Sumukha marry. Mātali begged Indra to prevent harm to Sumukha. Indra carried the request to Lord Vishṇu. Indra and Lord Vishṇu blessed Sumukha with long life. Āryaka then performed Sumukha's marriage to Mātali's daughter. *Mahā Bhārata*

Aryama – A son of Aditi and Kaṣyapa. He was one of the twelve Ādityas. *Mahā Bhārata*

Asamanjasa – Son of Sagara (*an ancestor of Lord Rāma*) and his wife Kēṣini. A great ascetic in a previous life, he lost his holiness by engaging in sex, and was born as Sagara's son. In another previous life, he was a Vaiṣya*. Travelling through a forest on business, he saw a pile of money and was about to take it. A fiend, guarding the money, told him "This money is mine. I am guarding it even though I am suffering from severe hunger. I will give you the money if you kill a cow and give it to me." He promised to kill a cow and bring it, took the money and left and forgot all about his promise. He died in the forest. In a later life, he was born to Sagara. The fiend remained angry at him for the broken promise. The fiend possessed Asamanjasa and made him do devilish things such as throwing children and old people in the river. The people complained about his actions to Sagara. Sagara banished him from the city. Asamanjasa had a son named Amṣumanta. Asamanjasa

finally died at the hands of the fiend. *Brahma Purāṇa*

Aṣana – Wife of Asura Emperor Bali. Their son was Bāṇa. *Bhāgavata*

Āsandiva – A Brahmin boy. His father made all the arrangements for his marriage and fixed a Muhurtam (*auspicious time*) for the wedding. The day before the wedding day, a Rākshasi (*female Asura**) abducted the bridegroom. She took the form of a Brahmin woman and raised him, telling people that he was her son. She threatened the boy that she would eat him if he did not behave in accordance with her direction. She brought a Brahmin girl and performed her marriage with the boy. Āsandiva looked at his bride and started crying. When his wife asked why he was crying, he said to her "The woman is not my mother, she keeps threatening to eat me. You were also brought here to be eaten. That is why I am sad." The girl advised her husband that if they went to the banks of the Gautami river and prayed to Lord Vishṇu, they will have nothing to fear. The couple did as she suggested. Āsandiva prayed and performed Tapas* directed towards Lord Vishṇu. Lord Vishṇu was pleased with the couple, gave them boons and killed the Rākshasi. *Brahmānḍa Purāṇa*

Āshāḍhabhūti – There was a Sanyāsi (*someone in the fourth stage of a Brahmin man's life, of total renunciation of worldly matters*) named Dēvaṣarma. He was a miser. He sold anything people gave him and sewed the money into a blanket and and kept it with him at all times. Only one man, Āshāḍhabhūti, knew that he had a lot of money. Āshāḍhabhūti was determined to somehow steal the money. He tried but did not succeed in robbing him.

Deciding on a ruse as the only way to separate Dēvaṣarma from the money he hoarded, Āshāḍhabhūti went to Dēvaṣarma and said "Sir, only you can save me. I am disgusted with worldly affairs. Pleasures of the flesh are like bubbles of water. Wealth is fickle and I have no interest in it. Please accept me as your disciple. I will serve you and find Mukti*." Dēvaṣarma believed him and accepted him as a disciple, but would not entrust the blanket to him. Āshāḍhabhūti made a practice of returning to their owners even trifles that stuck to his clothes, making sure that Dēvaṣarma noticed his actions. Dēvaṣarma was finally convinced that Āshāḍhabhūti was trustworthy, and on a trip, let him carry the blanket with the money in it. As soon as he got his hands on the blanket, Āshāḍhabhūti ran away with it. *Panchatantra*

Ashṭaka I – Son of Viṣvāmitra and Mādhavi. The oldest of Viṣvāmitra's hundred sons. He refused to accept Ṣunaṣṣēpha as his older brother. *Bhāgavata*

Ashṭaka II – Yayāti's maternal grandson. *Mahā Bhārata*

Ashṭāvakra – Son of Ēkapāda. Ēkapāda used to make his disciples work very hard on their studies. Ashṭāvakra, while still in his mother's womb, said to Ēkapāda "Why do you make your disciples work so hard? They are suffering from a lack of food or sleep." Ēkapāda, angry at these words, said "Since you spoke such twisted words regarding education, you will be born with eight twisted features (*deformities*) in your body", giving his unborn son a Ṣāpa*. The son was born with eight deformities. Before Ashṭāvakra's birth, Ēkapāda had gone to King Janaka's Sabha (*court*) with the aim of acquiring wealth. Ashṭāvakra was born in

the home of his maternal uncle Uddālaka. Uddālaka had a son named Ṣvētakētu. The two boys were nearly the same age and were studying the Vēdas together. One day, Ashṭāvakra was sitting on Uddālaka's lap. Ṣvētakētu saw him and said "Why are you sitting on my father's lap? Go sit on your own father's lap." Ashṭāvakra, hurt by these words, ran to his mother and asked her where his father was. She told him that his father went to King Janaka's court to earn money. Ashṭāvakra immediately went to King Janaka's city. There, he learned that his father was defeated by Vandi, the son of Varuṇa (*the God of Rain*) and kept as a captive under water. He went to the royal court to argue with Vandi. He defeated Vandi at the court, and obtained not only his father's release from under water, but also of every one else that Vandi was holding prisoner.

Ashṭāvakra wished to marry Suprabha, daughter of Vadānya, and asked her father. Intending to test him, Vadānya said "I will give you my daughter but first, go to North". Ashṭāvakra asked how far he should go. He was told "Go past the city of Kubēra (*the God of Wealth*), pass the place in the Himālayas where Lord Ṣiva pleased Pārvati and you will see a young woman. Come back after you see the woman and I will give you my daughter in marriage." Ashṭāvakra started on his journey. When he approached Kubēra's city, Kubēra met him, offered his hospitality and took him to his palace. After staying there a year watching Rambha, Ūrvaṣi and Tilōttama entertain with their music and dance, he took leave of Kubēra and proceeded towards the Himālayas. He entered a forest of young trees on the Himavat mountain. He saw many beautiful buildings there. He entered a golden building. A bevy of beautiful

women came forward and took him into the house. Informed of his arrival, the lady of the house came from her private quarters, offered him food and drink, and since night had fallen, invited him to sleep with her. Ashṭāvakra said "I am a bachelor observing a vow of celibacy. It is improper to sleep with someone else's wife. Leave me alone. Let me go on my way." The next morning, after he had a ceremonial bath, she asked him to marry her. He said, agitated, "You are a maiden. Your father or your brother should give you away in marriage. How can you give yourself? Who are you? Tell me the truth." She replied "I am North. Vadānya sent you here to find out how determined you are. You have passed his test. Go and marry Suprabha." He went back and married Suprabha.

Ashṭāvakra performed Tapas* for a very long time under water. Rambha and other Apsaras* pleased him by entertaining him with their dance and music. He offered them a boon. They said they wanted Lord Vishṇu to be their husband. He told them that when Lord Vishṇu takes His incarnation as Kṛshṇa, they will be His wives. Later, when they saw him after he emerged from the water, they laughed at him (*see the beginning of his story; he was born with a deformed body due to his father's Ṣāpa*). Upset by their rudeness, he gave them a Ṣāpa that when Kṛshṇa was not with them, they will be humiliated by some hunters. (See **Arjuna**) *Vishṇu Purāṇa*

Asikni – Daughter of a Prajāpati* named Panchajana and wife of Daksha. When Daksha was performing Tapas* at a holy place named Aghamarshaṇa, Lord Vishṇu appeared and gave him Asikni as his wife so that he could propagate the species. She had sons named Haryaṣvas and Ṣabaḷāṣvas and sixty daughters including

Bhānu, Lamba, Kakubdēvi, Viṣva and Sādhya. Lord Ṣiva's wife Sati was one of her daughters. *Bhāgavata; Ṣiva Purāṇa*

Asilōma – One of the commanders of Mahishāsura's forces. He fought Dēvi and was killed by Her before She killed Mahishāsura. *Dēvī Bhāgavata*

Asita I – (*also known as Bāhu*) Father of Sagara. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Son of Bharata, of the Sūrya (*solar; one of the two major royal lineages, the other being Chandra, or lunar*) dynasty. Afraid of his enemies, he ran away along with his wives and children and hid in the Āṣram of Sage Bhṛgu. One of his wives was Kāḷindi. While she was pregnant, one of her husband's other wives gave her Sagara (*Gara means poison; Sagara means poisoned*) food. When Sage Chyavana visited the Āṣram, she asked him to bless her that she would have a son. He told her she would have a son with Gara. Her son was Sagara. *Brahmānḍa Purāṇa*

Asita II – A Ṛshi (*Sage*). *Brahmānḍa Purāṇa*

Aṣma – Wife of Prāchīna and mother of Samyāti. *Mahā Bhārata*

Aṣmaka I – A Brahmin. King Janaka was once very sad due to separation from a family member and was contemplating leaving home. Aṣmaka came to him at the time. Janaka asked him: "If a man who had wealth and family is subsequently deprived of them, what kind of thinking causes him to be sad?" Aṣmaka explained that one should look upon such things as two pieces of wood that come together during a flood and if one realizes that separation would occur in time, happiness and sorrow will not touch one. *Mahā Bhārata*

Aṣmaka II – Son of King Kalmāshapāda and his wife Madayanti. Kalmāshapāda asked Madayanti to bear a Kshētraja* son by Sage Vasishṭha. She became pregnant and remained pregnant for seven years. Tired of waiting to give birth, she hit her stomach with an Aṣma (*stone*). Then her son was born and was named Aṣmaka. Aṣmaka's son was Mūlaka. *Bhāgavata; Vishṇu Purāṇa*

Aṣmantaka – Prince of the Magadha kingdom. He was killed by Abhimanyu in the Mahā Bhārata war. *Mahā Bhārata*

Aṣōka –Son of Bimbisāra and grandson of Chandragupta. He ruled the whole (*then known*) earth. His son was Suyaṣas. *Bhāgavata*

Asti – Daughter of Jarāsandha. She and her sister Prāpti were Kamsa's wives. They told their father that Kṛshṇa had killed Kamsa. Jarāsandha went to war against Mathura. *Vishṇu Purāṇa*

Āstīka – Son of a Sage named Jaratkāra. His mother was a Nāga* woman named Jaratkāru. He learnt the Vēdas from a Sage named Pramati and became a very learned scholar at a young age. His mother, realizing he would likely be the person most capable of dissuading Janamējaya (*Arjuna's great grandson*) from performing the Sarpa Yāga (*serpent sacrifice*) that was being planned, requested him to go to Janamējaya and make him stop it. Āstīka went to Janamējaya who had started the sacrifice, and impressed him with his knowledge and wisdom. Pleased with this Brahmin, Janamējaya decided to felicitate him. Āstīka convinced Janamējaya that a serpent sacrifice is not a proper Yāga and succeeded in making him stop it. *Mahā Bhārata*

Astras – Sons of Bhṛṣāṣva. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Asuras – Born from Lord Brahma's thigh, they wanted to have sex with Him. Brahma ran to Lord Vishṇu and begged Him for protection. Lord Vishṇu advised Him to discard that body. When Brahma discarded His body, a beautiful woman, Sandhya, emerged from it. The Asuras were enamored by her and pursued her. *Bhāgavata*

Āsuri – A Brahmin. Lord Vishṇu, during His incarnation as Kapila (*not one of the Daṣāvatāras, the ten incarnations most often mentioned in the Purāṇas. Some books mention a total of Ēkavimṣati, or twentyone incarnations*) taught him the intricacies of Sānkhya (*a system of Hindu philosophy*). *Bhāgavata*

Aṣvamēdhadatta – Son of Ṣatānīka. *Mahā Bhārata*

Aṣvani – Daughter of Dharaṇi and Daksha Prajāpati*. Wife of Chandra (*the Moon God*). *Mahā Bhārata*

Aṣvapati I – King of country named Kēkaya. His daughter was Kaikēyi (*one of the wives of Daṣaratha; Rāma's aunt*). His son was Yudhājit. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Once three Brahmins, Uddālaka, Prāchīnaṣāla, and Satyayagjna came to visit him. He offered them wealth. They declined it. He could not understand why they declined his generosity, considering that he did not have any significant faults and there were no thieves, adulterers or other evil people in his kingdom. Thinking that they considered his offering inadequate, he requested them to stay until he finished the Yagjna he was performing. He then offered them as much wealth as he was giving the Vēdic priest who officiated at his Yagjna. They explained that they did not seek wealth but to know the nature of Para Brahma*. Aṣvapati

explained the nature of Para Brahma (*the Supreme Being*) and Ātma (*soul*) to them. *Chāndōgya Upanishad*

Aṣvapati II – Ruler of country named Madra. As he was childless, he prayed to Goddess Sāvitri and Lord Brahma wishing for a son. Sāvitri appeared and told him that she would give him a daughter. He asked for a son. Lord Brahma also said He would give him a daughter. Sāvitri told him that he would have a daughter first and sons later and disappeared. His wife was named Māḷavi. A daughter was born to them. They named her Sāvitri and pampered her. When she reached marriageable age, her father announced that she could choose whom she wants to marry. She told her father that she wished to marry Satyavanta. When Sage Nārada visited him, Aṣvapati asked him what kind of person Satyavanta was. Sage Nārada told him that Satyavanta had just one more year to live. Aṣvapati asked his daughter to choose someone else but she refused to change her mind. So, he performed her marriage to Satyavanta. As a result of the boon Yama (*the God of Death*) gave Sāvitri, sons were born to Aṣvapati. *Mahā Bhārata*

Aṣvasēna – Son of Takshaka, a Nāga*. He was raised by Takshaka's brother Airāvata. He was protecting the Khāṇḍava forest. When Kṛshṇa and Arjuna were helping Agni (*the Fire God*) consume the Khāṇḍava forest, he was afraid. He put his tail in his mother's mouth and asked her to take him to Swarga (*heaven*). Arjuna, noticing this, cut off his tail and his mother's head. As Arjuna proceeded to kill him, Indra*, thinking his friend Takshaka was being killed, created an illusion named Mōhini (*Sanskrit for enchantress*). Because of this, Aṣvasēna became invisible to Arjuna, and was saved. Karṇa worshipped Aṣvasēna who took the

form of a serpent's hood. Karṇa deployed him as a weapon to cut off Arjuna's head. Kṛshṇa at that instant tilted Arjuna's chariot down so that Aṣvasēna knocked Arjuna's crown to the ground. Aṣvasēna then rose again to attack Arjuna, who killed him. *Mahā Bhārata*

Aṣvaṣira – A king. He conquered all the countries around and was performing a Yāga. Two Sages, Kapila and Jaigīshavya came to the Yāga hall. He welcomed them respectfully and asked them how one should worship Lord Vishṇu so that He comes under one's control. They said "We are Lord Vishṇu, worship us." He became angry at their conceit and holding his anger in check, said to them "I am not ignorant. Vishṇu rides Garutmanta (*a huge bird*) and holds a Ṣankha (*conch; each great warrior had a conch with a distinct sound, which they used to announce their arrival on the battlefield*) and Chakra*. Why do you speak like this?" Immediately, Kapila took the form of Vishṇu and Jaigīshavya that of Garutmanta. He said "You are creating illusions, but if you are really Vishṇu, where is the lotus in your navel? Where is Brahma (*who was born on a lotus extending from Vishṇu's navel*)?" A lotus grew out of Kapila's navel and Jaigīshavya became Brahma in the lotus. He again accused them of creating an illusion. The Sages disappeared and the hall was suddenly filled with wild animals. Realizing that the Sages were responsible, and in fear, he prayed to them. They reappeared, made the wild animals disappear, and said "You wanted to know how to get control of God. Know that He is in everything. We showed you all these to show you that God is omnipresent." Kapila explained to the king that a knowledgeable person who performs his duty will attain

Mukti*. Aṣvaṣira crowned his son Sthūlaṣira and retired to Tapōvana*. *Varāha Purāṇa*

Aṣvataru – A Nāga* king. His sons were friends with Ṛtadhwaja (*also known as Kuvalayāṣva*). They used to praise their friend to their father. Learning from his sons that Kuvalayāṣva's wife had passed away and that he was very sad, Aṣvataru, wanting to bring her back to life and believing that nothing is impossible if you tried hard enough, started to perform Tapas* directed towards Sarasvati (*Goddess of Learning and the Arts*). She appeared before him and fulfilled his wish to become a proficient musician. She also brought his brother Kambaḷa back to life and taught him music as well. Having become a musician, Aṣvataru went to Mount Kailāsa (*Lord Ṣiva's abode*) and was singing there in a pleasant voice with correct tones. Lord Ṣiva was pleased by his singing and asked him to choose a boon. Aṣvataru requested that Kuvalayāṣva's wife Madālasa be reborn, with her previous appearance and her previous memories and knowledge. Lord Ṣiva told him "Perform rites with offerings to your ancestors and eat the middle ball of rice. Then Madālasa will be born from your middle hood (*like many Nāgas in the Purāṇas, such as Ṣēshu, Aṣvataru had multiple hoods*)." Aṣvataru did as directed and Madālasa was reborn. He invited Kuvalayāṣva and reunited him with Madālasa. *Mārkanḍēya Purāṇa*

Aṣvatīrtha – A holy place near Kanyākubja. King Gādhi had a daughter named Satyavati. Ṛchīka requested Gādhi for his daughter's hand in marriage. Gādhi told him that he would oblige if Ṛchīka gave him a bride-price of one thousand horses each with one black ear and an all-white body. Ṛchīka prayed to Varuṇa (*the*

Rain God) who told him the horses would appear where and when he wanted them. Ṛchīka wanted them to appear at a place north of the Ganga river. The horses did appear where he desired, near Kanyākubja. The place came to be known as Aṣvatīrtha. *Mahā Bhārata*

Aṣvattha – An Asura*. He took the form of a tree on the banks of the Gautami river and was eating any Brahmin standing in his shade. The Brahmins in the area, afraid for their lives, prayed to the God Ṣani (*Saturn*). Ṣani said he would not do anything else until he finishes his Tapas*. The Brahmins said they would give him the benefit of all their Tapas. Receiving the full benefit of their Tapas, Ṣani went into the shade of the Aṣvattha tree. As the tree swallowed Ṣani, he killed it and emerged unscathed. Aṣvattha died. Another Asura named Pippala was Aṣvattha's companion. Ṣani killed him too. *Brahma Purāṇa*

Aṣvatthāma – Son of Drōṇa, archery Guru to the Kaurava and Pānḍava princes. When Aṣvatthāma was born, he made a very loud noise similar to the neighing of Ucchaiṣrava (*Indra's* horse*). Ākāṣavāṇi* named him Aṣvatthāma as a result. Aṣvatthāma, from his earliest years, was learning archery and all other skills along with his father's students, the Pānḍavas and Kauravas. He was especially skilled in archery but was concerned that Arjuna might become superior to him. He had the ability to shoot arrows accurately in the dark. Hoping to prevent Arjuna from acquiring the same skill, Aṣvatthāma gave instructions to the dining hall manager to never let Arjuna eat in the dark. One night, the lamp went out while Arjuna was dining. He managed to finish his dinner using his prior knowledge of the location of dishes, cutlery etc. He

realized then that he could train himself to perform other activities including archery without having to see his targets.

Drōṇa taught Aṣvatthāma an infallible weapon named Brahmaṣira (*literally Brahma's head*). Sage Agastya had given it to Drōṇa. Drōṇa taught it to Arjuna also. Drōṇa told Aṣvatthāma that the weapon must never be used against human beings. Aṣvatthāma was overly proud because of his knowledge of this weapon. One day he went to Kṛshṇa and said to Him "I will give you my weapon if you give me your Chakra*." Kṛshṇa replied, "Even Arjuna, dearest to me, never asked for my Chakra but you did. Take any one of my weapons that you like. Is it proper to ask for something in return while giving a friend what he wants? I do not want your weapon." So saying, Kṛshṇa put all his weapons in front of Aṣvatthāma. Unable to pick up the Chakra with either his left hand or right hand, Aṣvatthāma tried to lift it with both hands but was unable to move it. When Kṛshṇa asked him against whom he wanted to use the Chakra, he replied that he wanted it so that he can fight Kṛshṇa and not be defeated.

Aṣvatthāma did not get involved in the rivalry between the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas. However, because he lived in Duryōdhana's premises and was dependent on him, he was ready to fight beside him against the Pāṇḍavas, regardless of the righteousness or otherwise of the Kaurava cause.

During the war, Bhīma killed the elephant of King Indravarma of Māḷava (*who was fighting on Duryōdhana's behalf*) named Aṣvatthāma, and shouted loudly "Aṣvatthāma is dead!" Drōṇa (*the human Aṣvatthāma's father*) was slightly upset on hearing this, but discounted it because it came from Bhīma. At Bhīma's urging,

Dharmarāja said “Aṣvatthāma died” in a loud voice but added “the elephant” in a whisper. Drōṇa, devastated by the news that his only son had died, disarmed and was killed by his enemies’ arrows.

When, at the end of the war, Aṣvatthāma saw Duryōdhana’s thighs broken, he empathized and was very sad. Angry at the Pāṇḍavas and wanting to give Duryōdhana some satisfaction before his impending death, he vowed that he will kill the Pāṇḍavas and went looking for them. That night, standing under a tree, he watched some owls kill some sleeping crows and got the idea that he could also kill Pāṇḍavas while they were asleep. When he mentioned his plan to his uncle Kṛpāchārya, his uncle told him it is immoral. Aṣvatthāma, remembering the immoral manner in which the Pāṇḍavas had killed Bhīshma and his own father, decided to ignore his uncle’s concern and to proceed with his plan. As he was going toward the Pāṇḍavas’ tent, Lord Ṣiva stood in his way in the form of a huge apparition. The apparition was swallowing all the arrows he shot at it but would not budge. Deciding it must be a God, he saluted it with a Namaskāra*, and created a fire into which he was going to jump. Lord Ṣiva then assumed His true form and gave him a sword. Aṣvatthāma entered the tent, killed the sleeping Dhṛshṭadyumna and Ṣikhaṇḍi as well as the sons of the Pāṇḍavas. He took the heads he had cut off to show Duryōdhana. The Pāṇḍavas learned of his malicious acts. Draupadi was extremely angry and pleaded with Bhīma to punish him. Bhīma went out to search for Aṣvatthāma. Dharmarāja, Arjuna and Kṛshṇa followed in order to protect Bhīma. As Bhīma was berating him, Aṣvatthāma was about to deploy the infallible Brahmaṣira with the command, “Make the earth Apāṇḍava (*devoid*

of Pānḍavas)". Kṛshṇadwaipāyana (*another name of Sage Vyāsa*) told him to desist and said, "If you give them your Ṣirōmaṇi (*diamond on the head*), they will leave you unharmed". Aṣvatthāma would not listen even knowing that if the weapon is attacked by another weapon, there would be severe drought in the land for twelve years.

Kṛshṇa said to him, "As you are aborting the unborn babies of the Pānḍava women, let at least one of them survive. I will save one." but Aṣvatthāma refused to listen. Then Kṛshṇa asked Arjuna to counter with the same weapon against Aṣvatthāma and gave Aṣvatthāma a Ṣāpa* that he would roam for three thousand years alone, unable to find food, and covered with foul-smelling blood for his crimes of killing innocent children. Vyāsa told him that since he would not listen to him, Kṛshṇa's Ṣāpa would apply. Aṣvatthāma in return, gave Vyāsa a Ṣāpa that he would remain among human beings (*i.e., his access to the higher realms such as heaven will be denied*).

Aṣvatthāma ran from there in fear and deployed the weapon. Arjuna then deployed the same weapon against the one launched by Aṣvatthāma. As a result, the world was burning up. Sages begged the protagonists to recall the weapons but Aṣvatthāma was unable to recall his. The Sages then advised Aṣvatthāma to give up his Ṣirōmaṇi to the Pānḍavas and sue for peace with them. Aṣvatthāma agreed. Even Draupadi told her husbands to spare Aṣvatthāma's life and they settled for taking away his Ṣirōmaṇi, which was a great insult to him. Since the weapon he deployed was infallible, Aṣvatthāma said that it will rest only after aborting all the unborn children. Vyāsa consented to that. The weapon was

hurting the unborn baby of Uttara. Kṛshṇa intervened and saved that one baby (*Abhimanyu's son, Parīkshit*). Barely surviving his ill-advised attack on the Pānḍavas and dejected, Aṣvatthāma went to Vyāsa's Āṣram to perform Tapas*.

In the forthcoming Manvantara (*reign as Manu**) of Sūryasāvarṇika, Aṣvatthāma will be one of the Saptarshi*. *Mahā Bhārata*

Aṣvatthāma will be Vyāsa in the coming Dwāpara Yuga (*each cycle of Yugas, called a Kalpa, consists of Kṛta, Trēta, Dwāpara and Kali. The Mahā Bhārata war took place at the end of the Dwāpara Yuga of the present Kalpa, currently we are in Kali Yuga*). *Dēvī Bhāgavata*

Aṣvatthavṛksha – Once, when Lord Ṣiva and Goddess Pārvati were making love, Agni intruded and upset them. Pārvati became very angry at all the Dēvas and gave them a Ṣāpa that they would become Vṛkshas (*trees*). Lord Vishṇu became an Aṣvattha (*holy fig*) tree. *Padma Purāṇa*

Aṣvins – Once, Sangjna, the wife of Sūrya (*the Sun God*), unable to tolerate the brightness of her husband, took the form of a mare and was roaming in northern Kuru country. Sūrya also took the form of a stallion and followed her. She recognised her husband in the horse. Sūrya made love to her while both were in horses' bodies. The children born to them were the Aṣvins. Their names were Nāsatya and Dasra. *Brahmānḍa Purāṇa*

All the Dēvas were in a race for medical science. The agreement was that the winners will get medical knowledge and be physicians. Aṣvins were running in the race in a chariot drawn by a donkey. They had made a deal with Indra* and Agni that if they

won, they will share the prize with Indra and Agni. Indra and Agni got out of the Aṣvins' way and the Aṣvins won the race and became excellent physicians.

As such, the Aṣvins were the physicians to the Dēvas. They attached an iron leg to one Khēla, who had lost his leg in battle.

They granted a son named Hiraṇyahasta to Vadhrīmati, the wife of a eunuch. They brought back to life Rēbha and Vadana, who had drowned. They saved Bhujya who was lost at sea.

One day they saw Sukanya, wife of Sage Chyavana (*she was young and beautiful and he was old*) bathing and said to her "Beautiful lady! Your beauty deserves a better looking, young husband. Come with us. We will show you someone worthy of your beauty." Angry on hearing their words, Sukanya told her husband what they had said. He told her to accept their invitation. She went back and asked the Aṣvins to give her a young husband. Chyavana accompanied her. The Aṣvins and Chyavana bathed in the lake and came out as identical handsome young men. Sukanya again chose Chyavana out of them. Grateful to the Aṣvins for giving him youth and good looks, Chyavana arranged for them to receive a portion of Havya* from the Yāga performed by Ṣaryāti (*his father-in-law*). *Mahā Bhārata*

Āṭaki – Wife of a man named Ushasti. Husband and wife lived in the Kuru kingdom. Once, all the crops in the kingdom were destroyed by a huge hailstorm. There was a terrible famine. Āṭaki became thin and weak due to the lack of food. Ushasti obtained some coarse grain called Alachanda, normally fed to elephants, from an elephant-driver and gave them to her. Having eaten a little food earlier, she did not eat the grain but saved it. The next

morning, Ushasti said "I do not have even the energy I need to go to the king. If I had some food, I could eat it, go to the king and earn some money". Hearing this, Āṭaki brought the grain she saved and gave it to her husband. *Chāndōgya Upanishad*

Atibala, Bala – Two Mantras, daughters of Lord Brahma. Those who chant these will be free from hunger, thirst and travel fatigue. Sage Viṣvāmitra taught these Mantras to Lord Rāma and his brother Lakshmaṇa. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Atidhanva – A Sage. He was of the lineage of Sages that began with Ṣunaka. He told his disciple Udara Ṣāṇḍila that his descendants will be wealthy and prosperous in proportion to their proficiency in Sāma Vēda. *Chāndōgya Upanishad*

Atikāya - Rāvaṇa's son as a result of his raping Dhānyamāli. Rāvaṇa himself raised him and appointed him the commander-in-chief of his army. He was very strong. In the Rāmāyaṇa war, Lakshmaṇa killed him using a powerful weapon named Brahmāstra. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Atiratha – Son of Satyakarma. Friend of Dhṛtarāshṭra. He found the baby Karṇa floating on the river in a basket and adopted and raised him. His wife was Rādha. *Mahā Bhārata*

Atirātra – Son of Chākshusha Manu*. *Matsya Purāṇa*

Atisāra – Son of Nitanta. He and his four brothers including Sālvēya all married a woman named Ajita. *Mahā Bhārata*

Atithi – Son of Kuṣa (*one of the twin sons of Lord Rāma and Sīta*). At the time of his coronation, he ordered the release not only of all prisoners but also of all the birds from their cages. He was a

very popular king. *Raghu Vamṣa*

Ātrēya – Disciple of a Muni named Vāmadēva. His Guru asked him to go to a king named Ṣala and bring back some horses he had given to the king on loan. He went and asked the king, but the king refused to return the horses. *Mahā Bhārata*

Atri – Mind-born son of Lord Brahma. A Sage. His wife was Anasūya. Once, when he was performing intense Tapas* hoping to be blessed with offspring, Lord Brahma, Lord Vishṇu, and Lord Ṣiva all appeared together. Atri asked them, "I was praying to only one of you. Why did all three of you come?" They said, "We are not three separate entities but only one. We will fulfill your wish. You will have sons who have our attributes", and went away. Atri had a son Chandra (*the Moon God*) with the attributes of Lord Brahma, a son named Dattātrēya with the attributes of Lord Vishṇu, and a son named Durvāsa with the attributes of Lord Ṣiva.

Atri was present when King Pṛthu was performing Yāgas on the banks of the Sarasvati river in his kingdom Brahmāvarta. He noticed how Indra* surreptitiously stole the sacrificial horse and informed Pṛthu's son. *Bhāgavata*

Once, when Atri was making love to his wife, as his semen was about to enter her womb, Vāyu (*the God of Wind*) divided it into three parts: one flew up into Vāyu's eye and became Chandra and the other two parts entered Anasūya's womb. *Mārkanḍēya Purāṇa*

Once, when Atri was leaving home to go to the forest to perform Tapas, his wife stood in front of him. He asked her, "Will you come with me to perform Tapas? Or will you stay home and look after our children?" She replied that it was not proper for him to leave without showing her the means to provide for the family's

needs. She pointed out that a king was responsible to ensure all the people had the means to live. Atri thought she was right and went to King Pṛthu and praised him profusely, comparing him to Brahma and Indra. Sage Gautama who was also present, took exception to Atri's extravagant praise of Pṛthu. Deciding that only someone as wise as Sanatkumāra can settle their dispute, Atri and Gautama went to him. He judged that Atri was right. Atri and Gautama went back to King Pṛthu and informed him of the decision. King Pṛthu gave Atri much wealth. *Mahā Bhārata*

Once, seeing Chandra being swallowed by Rāhu (*what we know as an eclipse*), Sūrya (*the Sun God*) was terrified and started sinking. The world was being deprived of light. Atri reassured Sūrya and convinced him that he was in no danger and good things will happen to him. Sūrya resumed his position. *Brahmānḍa Purāṇa*

Auddālaki – A Muni. Once, after bathing and performing morning ablutions at the river, he went home without his Darbha (*blades of sacred grass*) and his Kamanḍala*. Remembering what he had done, he asked his son Nāchikētu to go and fetch them. By the time Nāchikētu went to the river, it had risen and the Darbha and Kamanḍala had been washed away. Nāchikētu returned from the river and told his father he could not find the items. Auddālaki, angry with his son, said to him, "Go and visit Yama (*the God of Death*)." Nāchikētu immediately fell down and became unconscious. Auddālaki, remorseful for his thoughtless words, cried in sorrow. Nāchikētu recovered the next morning, as if from sleep. (*He informed his father that Yama showed him Puṇya* Lōkas.*) He told his father that Yama told him that the best parts of

the Puṇya Lōkas are reserved for those who did Gōdāna (*donating cows to Brahmins*). *Mahā Bhārata*

Aunikumbha – A Brahmin who lived in the city of Kāṣi*. Once, Nikumbha (*one of Lord Ṣiva's minions*) appeared to him in a dream and directed him to build a temple to Viṣvēṣvara (*Lord Ṣiva*). He told Divōdās (*the king of Kāṣi*) about his dream. Divōdās built the temple. *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*

Aurva – A Muni of Bhṛgu's lineage (*known as Bhārgavas*). Son of Chyavana. Descendants of Kṛtavīrya were harassing the Bhārgavas, demanding money. They even threatened to kill Chyavana's pregnant wife. Chyavana then hid the fetus in his thigh. Since he was born from a Ūru (*thigh*), the son was known as Aurva. The descendants of Kṛtavīrya, who were threatening his mother, all became blind when they saw Aurva. When they begged her to restore their sight, she told them, "You did not become blind due to me. You were blinded by the brilliance of Aurva." They prayed to him and he restored their sight. But Aurva wanted to burn all three worlds by the fire of his Tapas* because the kings killed all his ancestors en masse. When he started his Tapas the spirits of his ancestors appeared and said, "Sir, please stop your Tapas. We let the kings be the instruments of our death because we did not want to live too long on earth, but we would have not been allowed in heaven if we committed suicide. Do not blame the Kshatriyas for our death." Aurva agreed to stop his Tapas. However, because the fire he generated to destroy all three worlds would consume him instead, they advised him to immerse the fire in the ocean. Aurva did as they advised. The spiritual power of his Tapas took the form of a horse, Aurvānala. Aurva's son was

Ṛchīka. Aurva had a daughter Kandaḷi, who was an Ayōnija (*not born through a birth canal*). Aurva gave her to Durvāsa. *Mahā Bhārata; Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa*

Aurvānala – Aurva, who was performing intense Tapas*, stopped it at the direction of the spirits of his Pitṛ Dēvas (*ancestors*). In order to save himself from being consumed by the fire that resulted from his Tapas, he immersed it in the ocean. The fire took the form of a horse named Aurvānala.

As Aurva was performing intense Tapas in order to have children, a group of Munis came and said to him, "Why are you doing Tapas when you want children? You can become a father by sleeping with your wife." He replied, "Is it not true that Lord Brahma and others, by the spiritual power gained by Tapas, have mind-born sons? I will also have a child the same way." So saying, he made a fire by rubbing his thigh. The fire became his son. The heat of the fire was felt all over the universe and the worlds were incapable of withstanding it. Brahma came to him and told him, "The fire will be your son and will be in the ocean, known as Aurvānala. At the time of the Praḷaya (*fiery end of the universe*), my essence will combine with him." Brahma thus persuaded Aurva to immerse the fire, Aurvānala, in the ocean (*possible reference to an undersea volcano*). *Hari Vaṃśa*

Ausīnarapati – Father of Ajita who married five brothers in a Swayamvara*. *Mahā Bhārata*

Ausīnari – A woman of the Ṣūdra* caste. She lived in Girivraja. She had sons by Gautama, one of whom was named Kākshīva. *Mahā Bhārata*

Avāchīna – Son of Jayatsēna and husband of Maryāda. Their son was Arihu. *Mahā Bhārata*

Avakrīta – Son of Bharadvāja. He was jealous of respected scholars such as Raibhya and his sons. He started performing Tapas* aiming to become a greater scholar than them. Indra* appeared before him and asked why he was performing Tapas. Avakrīta told him that his purpose was to acquire knowledge in the Vēdas and other Ṣāstras (*sciences, scriptures*) without having to read anything. Indra said to him "Knowledge must be received from Gurus. Is it proper to learn by performing Tapas? Learning gained from Tapas makes one vain and envious. Stop your Tapas." Avakrīta ignored Indra's advice and continued the Tapas. Later, Indra came back disguised as an old Brahmin, stood on the shores of the Ganga river and started throwing fistfuls of sand into the river. Avakrīta, seeing this, asked him what he was doing. The fake Brahmin replied that he was throwing sand to build a causeway. Avakrīta laughed and said, "How can fistfuls of sand cover the river?" The Brahmin said "Is what you are doing any more realistic? Can you gain knowledge by performing Tapas? Stop it now." Avakrīta insisted that he will continue his Tapas until he became a scholar. Indra assumed his true form and gave Avakrīta his wish. Happy with the knowledge he had obtained, Avakrīta described to his father the manner in which he became learned. His father told him that his vanity is improper and advised him to go and stay with the sons of Raibhya without jealousy. Avakrīta went to Sage Raibhya's Āṣram. There he saw Raibhya's daughter-in-law (*wife of Raibhya's son Parāvasu*), felt lust for her and expressed his desire. Afraid that Avakrīta might give her a Ṣāpa* if she

refused his advances, she said yes to him but informed her father-in-law of Avakrīta's desire. Angry with Avakrīta, Raibhya performed a Hōma* and created a beautiful young woman and an Asura. (*apparently, the Asura could not kill Avakrīta as long as he had his Kamaṇḍala* in his hand. The idea was, given Avakrīta's lust for beautiful women, the woman can get him to put away the Kamaṇḍala and then the Asura could kill him.*) The woman went to Avakrīta and asked for his Kamaṇḍala. As soon as he saw how beautiful she was, he felt lust for her and gave her the Kamaṇḍala. As soon as he left his Kamaṇḍala, the Asura attacked him. Avakrīta ran and tried to hide in the ocean. As soon as he entered it, the ocean ran dry. He then ran to his father's house and hid in the fire. The fire was immediately extinguished. The Asura then caught and killed Avakrīta. Raibhya's son Arvāvasu, going to a Yāga to be performed by King Bṛhaddyumna, prayed to the Dēvas who revived Avakrīta.

When Avakrīta questioned why Raibhya was able to kill him even though he had acquired all knowledge, he was told that that was because Raibhya received his knowledge from a Guru. *Mahā Bhārata*

Avanti – Capital of the country of Ujjain. One of the cities capable of giving Mukti* to residents. *Mahā Bhārata*

Avindhya – An old Asura*. He asked Trijaṭa (*Rāvaṇa's niece who was guarding the abducted Sīta; she was sympathetic to the captive*) to inform Sīta that Rāma joined Sugrīva and that He would come to Lanka* and rescue Her. After his son Indrajit was killed in battle, Rāvaṇa, angry and sad, came to the Aṣōka garden vowing to kill Sīta in revenge. Avindhya asked him, "if you are a

man, why don't you kill Ṣrī Rāma?" and told him that it was not a manly thing to kill a woman and stopped him. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Avijnātagati – Son of a Vasu named Anala (*also known as Anila*). *Mahā Bhārata; Matsya Purāṇa*

Avīkshit – Son of Karandhama. His mother was Vīra. As soon as he was born, his father invited astrologers and asked them what his horoscope indicates about his future. They told him that the planets Guru (*Jupiter*) and Budha* (*Mars*) were in a favourable aspect and no evil planets were looking at him. Because he was being seen by auspicious planets, his father decided to name him Avīkshit. Avīkshit became proficient in archery and other weapons and in Swayamvaras*, married Varagauri, Subhadra, Līlāvati, Dārika, Mālyavati, and Kumudvati. Later he went to the Swayamvara of Viṣāla, daughter of King Viṣāla. The other princes at the Swayamvara, jealous of him, banded together, attacked him, defeated and tied him up. Viṣāla refused to choose anyone else. The Swayamvara was stopped for that day. Avīkshit's father, learning of his son's defeat and capture by other princes, came with his army, defeated the princes arrayed against his son and released him. Viṣāla said she would marry him. However, Avīkshit refused to marry her because she witnessed his defeat. Karandhama returned to his city with his son. Avīkshit took a vow of celibacy. Viṣāla declared that she will never marry anyone but Avīkshit and that even in her next life she wants only Avīkshit as her husband. With her father's consent, she went to the forest to perform Tapas*. Karandhama was growing old. His only son Avīkshit was observing celibacy. His parents wanted to turn him toward family life. His mother approached him and said to him "I

am planning to perform a Vrata* called ‘Kimicchaka’ and would like you to participate in it. You should give to anyone who comes to you whatever they wish.” He agreed and she started the Vrata. The royal priest announced that anyone who wants something should approach Avīkshit and he will give it to them. His father asked for a grandson, and he agreed to become a family man to fulfill that wish. One day, while he went hunting in the forest, he heard a voice crying out, “I am Avīkshit’s wife! Help me!” Surprised and suspecting that it might be a ruse by an Asura*, he was cautious. Then he saw a beautiful young woman being harassed by an Asura. He killed the Asura and saved the woman. The Dēvas, pleased with him for killing the Asura, offered him a boon. Thinking of his father’s wish, he told them he wanted a son. The Dēvas told him he would have a son by the woman he saved from the Asura. He protested that he loved Viṣāla and would not have conjugal relations with any other woman. They revealed that the woman he saved was, in fact, Viṣāla. Recognizing each other, they were proceeding to his city to get formally married. A Gandharva* king, who was the father of Viṣāla in a previous birth, met them, revealed that Viṣāla was his daughter Bhāmini who was born as Viṣāla due to a Ṣāpa*, and took them to his city and performed their marriage. A son was born to Avīkshit and Viṣāla. Having been informed that the Maruts (*winds*) of the north, south, east and west would shower their blessings on him, they named the son Marut. Avīkshit went to his father accompanied by his wife and son. Everyone was happy. Karandhama asked his son to ascend to the throne so that he could leave for the Tapōvana*. Avīkshit protested that he is ineligible to rule because he was

defeated in battle and was unwilling to agree to his father's suggestion in spite of his father's entreaties. He crowned his son Marut instead and left for the Tapōvana. During Marut's reign, Nāgas* were harassing Sages. Marut used an arrow called Samvarta and burned down Nāga Lōka. Nāgas approached Viṣāla, and reminding her of a promise she had made in the past, requested her to make Marut stop the destruction of their species. She asked her husband to help. Avīkshit asked his son to stop killing the serpent people. Marut refused to listen, however much his father tried. Avīkshit resorted to figting his son (*the protocol was that when two people who were not enemies disagreed about something and fought, the loser had to do as the victor wants*). The Sages intervened and told them "The dead Sages have been revived. The serpent people are not afraid for their lives. Please stop fighting." Marut saluted his father with a Namaskāra*. Avīkshit blessed his son and returned to Tapōvana. *Mārkanḍēya Purāṇa*

Āyati – Daughter of Mēru mountain (*in the Purāṇas, mountains are anthropomorphed into men*). Wife of Dhāta. Their son was Prāṇa. *Brahmānḍa Purāṇa*

Ayōdhya – Capital city of the kingdom of Kōsala. Several kings of the Sūrya (*solar; one of the two major royal lineages, the other being Chandra, or lunar*) dynasty (*Lord Rāma the most illustrious among them*) ruled from this city. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Ayōmukha – One of the sons of Danu. *Mahā Bhārata*

Ayōmukhi – A female Asura*. While Lakshmaṇa was searching for Sīta in the forest, she intercepted him and said "I will be your

wife; stay here with me." Lakshmaṇa cut off her ears and nose and made her ugly. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Āyu I – Son of Purūrava by the Apsara* Ūrvaṣi. When his brothers were preparing to attack and kill the Munis responsible for their father's death, he remonstrated with them, fought them and stopped them. His wife was Swarbhānavi. Nahusha, Vṛddhaṣarma, Gaya and Anēnasa were their sons. *Brahmānḍa Purāṇa; Bhāgavata*

Āyu II– A (*articulate*) frog king. He had a daughter named Suṣōbhana. She used to assume a human female form and seduce kings. She was the wife of a king named Parīkshit (*different from Arjuna's grandson*) for some time. Once, when the couple entered the lake where Āyu lived, Suṣōbhana suddenly disappeared. Parīkshit, convinced that the frogs in the lake had abducted her, began to have them killed. Āyu then appeared before him in the guise of an old Brahmin, explained that Suṣōbhana was his daughter and requested the king to stop the killing. Parīkshit told him that he would not stop unless Suṣōbhana was brought to him. Āyu then brought his daughter and handed her back to the king, and because she had deceived several kings the same way, gave her a Ṣāpa* that her sons will be deceitful. *Mahā Bhārata*

Āyushmanta – Son of Prahlāda, a great devotee of Lord Vishṇu. *Matsya Purāṇa*

Ayutānīka – Son of Mahā Bhauma and husband of Kāmuka. Akrōdhana was their son. *Mahā Bhārata*

Ayutāyu I – Son of Sindhudwīpa and father of Ṛtuparṇa. *Vishnu Purāṇa*

Ayutāyu II – Son of Rathika. *Bhāgavata*

– B –

Babhru I – Disciple of Pathya. He studied the Atharva Vēda. *Bhāgavata*

Babhru II – Son of Vidarbha's son Rōmapāda. His son was Vibhu. *Bhāgavata*

Babhru III – Son of Sātvata's son Dēvāpṛthu. In his day, there was no one who did not know him. There was no man higher than Babhru. Many people achieved Mukti* by practicing the Yōga taught by him. *Mahā Bhārata*

Babhruvāhana – Son of Arjuna and his wife Chitrāngada (*each of the Pānḍavas had at least one wife he did not share with his brothers, in addition to Draupadi, shared by all five*). His capital was Maṇipura. After he was born, he did not get to see his father for a very long time. Learning that Arjuna, who was guarding Dharmarāja's sacrificial horse for the Aṣvamēdha Yāga* was coming to his kingdom, he was happy to finally to see his father and greeted him with a Namaskāra*. Arjuna did not show any affection for his son but asked, in annoyance "A king is one who captures the horse. How can one who, in fear, greets the protector of the horse with a Namaskāra be a king? Someone from our lineage should fight. How can he be humble?" and laughed at

Babhruvāhana. At that moment, Arjuna's Nāga* wife, Ulūchi, came there from Nāga Lōka. She explained that she is like a mother to Babhruvāhana and persuaded him to fight Arjuna. Arjuna and Babhruvāhana battled each other and both fell. Chitrāngada, grieving for the death of her son, scolded Ulūchi, saying "My son died due to you. Do you not have any sons? Why did you cause this fight? Bring my son back." In the meantime, Babhruvāhana, who only fainted, regained consciousness. Ulūchi brought the Mṛta Sanjīvani Maṇi (*Sanskrit for a 'diamond which, when touched to a dead person, has the power to bring them back to life'*) from Nāga Lōka, gave it to Babhruvāhana and asked him to touch it to Arjuna's heart. As Babhruvāhana did so, Arjuna came back to life. *Maha Bharata*

Arjuna fell dead, hit by an arrow from Babhruvāhana. Chitrāngada and Ulūchi both came there and were saddened by the sight of their husband lying dead. Ulūchi asked Babhruvāhana to go to her father in Nāga Lōka and bring the Mṛta Sanjīvani. Babhruvāhana went there and asked for the diamond. The Nāgas, after discussion among themselves, refused to give it to him. Babhruvāhana returned and informed Ulūchi of the refusal. Ulūchi became very angry. With the permission of his mother and aunt, Babhruvāhana went to war against the Nāgas. A Nāga named Dhṛtarāshṭra, after fighting Babhruvāhana and being defeated, realized that his defeat was caused by his sons refusing to give the Mṛta Sanjīvani. He scolded his sons and then gave Babhruvāhana the Maṇi. This angered Dhṛtarāshṭra's sons, who preceded Babhruvāhana to the battlefield and stole Arjuna's head. When Babhruvāhana reached the battlefield, he was shocked to find his

father's head missing. When Babhruvāhana prayed to Lord Kṛshṇa, Arjuna's head was restored. Babhruvāhana then revived Arjuna using the diamond. *Jaimini Bhārata*

Badari – A sacred forest. It housed the Āṣrams of many Munis. Nara and Nārāyaṇa performed Tapas* here. *Dēvī Bhāgavata*

Badaripāda – A sacred place of pilgrimage. It was here that a woman named Prabhāvati inserted her legs and feet as fuel in a fire to cook some Badari (*Jujube*) fruit given to her by Indra*, who came to test her disguised as Sage Vasishṭha. *Matsya Purāṇa*

Bahuḷa – Wife of Uttama. Mother of Uttama Manu*. While Uttama did love Bahuḷa, she was indifferent towards him. One day, when Uttama offered her some wine, she insulted him by rejecting it in front of everyone. Uttama, angered by her behaviour, ordered her to be expelled to the forest at which she felt relieved and left. A Nāga* king named Sālapōtaka saw Bahuḷa and falling in love with her, brought her home with him. His daughter Nanda, surmising that Bahuḷa would be a rival to her mother, hid her. She did not reveal where she hid Bahuḷa in spite of her father's insistent questioning. Angered by her stubbornness, he gave her a Ṣāpa* that she would become mute. After some time, an Asura* named Balāka, in accordance with Uttama's direction, took Bahuḷa back to her husband. Suṣarma (*friend of Bahuḷa's husband Uttama*) performed a Yāga to cleanse her virtue. She lived happily with her husband after that and a son named Uttama was born to them. *Mārkanḍēya Purāṇa*

Bahuḷāṣva – King of the country of Mithila (*which was also the country ruled at a different time by Janaka, father of Sīta*). He was

a righteous and moral ruler. A pious Brahmin named Ṣrutadēva also lived in Mithila at that time. Lord Kṛshṇa, accompanied by many great Sages, visited Mithila to see the king and the Brahmin. They both greeted Kṛshṇa and the Munis respectfully, and requested the opportunity to provide hospitality to them. Kṛshṇa and the Munis spent a few days with the king and with the Brahmin without the two of them knowing of the stay by the guests with the other. *Bhāgavata*

Bahumūlaka – Son of Kadruva. A Nāga*. *Mahā Bhārata*

Bāhuka I – Son of King Vṛka of Ayōdhya (*the city where Lord Rāma would be born some generations later*). When his kingdom was conquered by his enemies, the Haihayas (*alternate form is Hayahaya*), he and his wives went to live in a forest. He died there while one of his wives was pregnant. The son born to her was Sagara. *Bhāgavata; Vishṇu Purāṇa*

Bāhuka II – This was the pseudonym adopted by King Nala while he, in a deformed body, served as a cook in the kitchen of King Ṛtuparṇa. Once, he was crying loudly due to his separation from his wife. Some Brahmins sent to search the forest for Nala heard Nala's cries and asked him why he was crying. He told them that a soldier named Mandapragjna cried like that when he was separated from his wife and that he was just imitating that man. The Brahmins suspected that he might be the object of their search. When Damayanti's father announced a second Swayamvara* for her, Bāhuka went there as Ṛtuparṇa's chariot-driver. Bāhuka kissed Damayanti's son. By that and other evidence, it was recognised that Bāhuka was, in fact, Nala. Due to a provision by the Nāga*

Karkōṭaka after he bit Nala, Bāhuka regained his form as Nala. *Mahā Bhārata*

Bahvāṣi – Son of Gāndhāri and Dhṛtarāshṭra. *Mahā Bhārata*

Bahvṛchapravara – Son of Sage Ṣaunaka. *Bhāgavata*

Baka I – An Asura*. In his former life, he was a Gandharva*. He was then an extreme devotee of Lord Ṣiva. He used to pick a lotus flower each day from a lake and use it in worship of Ṣiva. One day, he picked a lotus from a lake belonging to Pārvati (*Consort of Lord Ṣiva*), unaware that it was Hers. Ṣiva's servants caught him and took him to Pārvati. Pārvati angrily asked "Why did you pick the lotus I use to worship Lord Kṛshṇa?" and sang the praises of Kṛshṇa. He expressed a desire to see Kṛshṇa. Pārvati told him "Kṛshṇa will be born on earth. You will become an Asura, see Kṛshṇa and come back to heaven." *Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa*

Baka II – An Asura*. Once, while Lord Kṛshṇa and Balarāma were returning after the cows grazed, Baka (*Sanskrit for 'crane', a bird*), sent by Kamsa (*Kṛshṇa's evil uncle*) took the form of a giant crane and swallowed Kṛshṇa. Kṛshṇa slit Baka's throat and exited. *Bhāgavata*

Baka III – Son of a Muni named Dalbha. He was also known by the name Glāva. He helped the Munis in the Naimiṣa forest by acting as the Ṛtvija* and Udgāta (*singer of the hymns of the Sāma Vēda*). Once, he saw a (*articulate*) pure white dog and some ordinary dogs following him. The ordinary dogs (*also articulate*) said to the white dog "Please provide food for us by the power of your singing." Baka was watching to see what the white dog would do. The white dog asked the other dogs to come back at sunrise

the next day. They came and each dog grabbing the tail of the next one, started turning in a circle while chanting "hem". Baka realized that they were acting like Ṛtvijas and Udgātas. *Chāndōgya Upanishad*

Baka IV – A Muni. Once upon a time, he requested a king named Dhṛtarāshṭra (*different from the father of Duryōdhana*) to give him a cow. The king insulted him and sent him away empty-handed. Angry with the king, he started to perform a Hōma* when suddenly, the people in the kingdom began to fall down like cut-down trees. Dhṛtarāshṭra, realizing that his treatment of the Muni must be causing the distress of his people, went to Baka, presented him with many cows and prayed for his forgiveness. *Mahā Bhārata*

Baka V – An Asura*. He was harassing the people in the city of Ēkachakrapura, eating them at will. The citizens of the city begged him saying "We will send one person along with much food to you each day. That person will also be yours to eat. Please stop raiding our city and killing indiscriminately." The arrangement, that each day one person will bring to the Asura a cart filled with food, drawn by two bulls, was agreed to by the Asura. The Asura would eat the food, the person, and the two bulls. While the Pāṇḍavas were staying with a family in that city, Bhīma came to know that it was the turn of the son of the owner of the house where they were staying, to be part of Baka's meal. Bhīma took the boy's place and drove the cart to Baka. Not seeing Baka, Bhīma started to eat the food himself. Baka came, shouting loudly, and attacked Bhīma. The two engaged in hand-to-hand combat. Bhīma killed the Asura. Baka's younger brother was Kimmīra. *Mahā Bhārata*

Bakadālbhya – A Muni. When Dharmarāja was grieving in the forest at the beginning of the twelve year exile, this Muni visited him and assured him that good things will happen in the lives of the Pānḍavas because of their reverence for Brahmins and their allegiance to Dharma (*righteous path*). *Mahā Bhārata*

Bala I – Son of Anāyu and her husband Kaṣyapa Prajāpati*. *Mahā Bhārata*

Bala II – Son of Pāriyātra, a king of the Sūrya (*solar; one of the two major royal lineages, the other being Chandra, or lunar*) dynasty. His son was Chala. *Bhāgavata*

Bāladhi – A Muni. Grieving the loss of his son, he prayed to the Dēvas and had a son Mēdhāvi who was blessed with a long life. *Mahā Bhārata*

Balāka – An Asura*. As a Brahmin named Suṣarma was performing a Yāga for the purpose of exterminating Asuras, he abducted and hid the Brahmin's wife. Suṣarma requested King Uttama to retrieve his wife. The king found out that Balāka was keeping her hidden, went and was surprised to see that the Brahmin's wife was not harmed in any way. He asked Balāka "You did not eat this woman, you did not assault her sexually. Why did you abduct her?" Balāka replied "If I wanted to make love, are there not any number of Dēva women I can have? The Brahmin was performing a Yāga to destroy the Asura race. I took his wife away so that he will not be eligible to perform any religious rites. Now I am your servant. I will do whatever you ask of me. I will come to you whenever you 'think of'* me." Per the king's direction, Balāka returned Suṣarma's wife to her house.

Afterwards, he also brought King Uttama's wife Bahuḷa from the house of the Nāga* King Sālapōtaka, who had earlier abducted her, back to Uttama. *Mārkanḍēya Purāṇa*

Balarāma – Son of Rōhiṇi and Vasudēva. As Lord Vishṇu prepared to start His Kṛshṇa incarnation, Ādi Ṣēshu (*multi-hooded serpent on whom Vishṇu reclines*), preparing to take birth on earth, was growing in Dēvaki's womb as her seventh child. As Kamsa was killing Dēvaki's babies soon after they were born, Vishṇu directed Yōgamāya (*Dēvi, the Supreme Being, in a state of Yōga*) to transfer the fetus into the womb of Rōhiṇi (*another wife of Vasudēva*). Yōgamāya did so. Thus, Ādi Ṣēshu was born to Rōhiṇi as Balarāma. Gada, Sāraṇa, Durmada, and Vipula were his brothers. He acquired the name Sankarshaṇa because of the termination of Dēvaki's pregnancy, and the name Bala (*Sanskrit for 'strong'*) due to his extreme strength. He and Kṛshṇa were inseparable. They, along with the cowherd boys, used to play together and guard the cattle as they grazed. Once, when the Asura* Pralamba deceitfully took the form of a cowherd and joined in the sports, Balarāma killed him within the sports. He and Kṛshṇa killed two wrestlers in the employ of Kamsa (*their evil uncle*), Chāṇūra and Mushṭika. He and Kṛshṇa, while they were strolling in the palm garden, also killed the Asura Dhēnuka who tried to spear them to death. Balarāma was an expert in the art of fighting using a Gada (*mace*). He taught the art to Duryōdhana, making him a skilled fighter. He was fond of Duryōdhana, who was his favourite disciple. Kṛshṇa intended to give Balarāma's sister Subhadra in marriage to Arjuna. Subhadra also wanted to marry Arjuna, but Balarāma was opposed to him. Kṛshṇa would

not openly defy Balarāma. He would, however, somehow achieve His objectives. Balarāma had great respect for Yōgis (*ascetics*). So, when Arjuna came disguised as a Yōgi, Balarāma himself directed Subhadra to look after the Yōgi and his needs.

Balarāma and Kṛshṇa both received their education from Sage Sāndīpa. When their Guru's son was abducted and hidden in the ocean by an Asura, they had Varuṇa (*the God of Rain*) bring him back. When Dēvaki expressed a desire to see her dead babies, Balarāma and Kṛshṇa went to the abode of Yama (*the God of Death*), brought their dead brothers and showed them to Dēvaki.

Balarāma married Rēvati. When Kṛshṇa was taking Rukmiṇi away, her brother Rukmi came to fight Him. Kṛshṇa was about to kill Rukmi. Balarāma intervened and said "Do not kill him. Let him go after shaving his head. That is equivalent to killing him." Balarāma went to Rukmi's house for Pradyumna's wedding (*with Rukmi's daughter*). Remembering the insult engineered by Balarāma against him, Rukmi, intending to humiliate him, invited Balarāma to games of chance. They played. Balarāma was defeated at first. Rukmi informed all the kings who were present about Balarāma's defeat. The assembled kings were divided in their opinion about who had won. Rukmi and Balarama played again. The onlookers remained silent. This time Ākāṣavāṇi* proclaimed that Balarāma was the winner. Rukmi, angered by the decision, could not restrain himself and started to abuse Balarāma. The two battled each other. Balarāma killed Rukmi in the fight.

Sāmba (*son of Lord Kṛshṇa*) went to Hastināpura and tried to abduct Duryōdhana's daughter Lakshaṇa. The Kauravas foiled his attempt and captured him. Balarāma learnt of Sāmba's plight. He

went to Hastināpura and asked Duryōdhana to release him. Duryōdhana ridiculed him, saying "A relationship with the likes of Balarāma is like putting one's sandals on one's head." Enraged by these words, Balarāma declared that he would submerge Hastināpura in the Ganga river if Sāmba was not immediately released. He hit the ground with his Hala (*Balarama's signature weapon, a plough*). The whole city rocked like a boat in turbulent water. Bhīshma and the Kaurava elders, realizing that it was Balarāma who caused the city to shake, prayed to him and not only released Sāmba but performed the marriage of Lakshaṇa and Sāmba.

After Kṛshṇa killed the Asura Naraka, a Vānara* friend of Naraka, named Dvivida, was trashing the city of Dwāraka and its gardens. Balarāma threw some rocks at him to shoo him away, but Dvivida ignored them and went on destroying the city. Balarāma killed him using his Hala.

Visiting some relatives, Balarāma, accompanied by Gōpikas (*Sanskrit for 'cowherd women'*), went to the Yamuna river to bathe. He called out to Yamuna (*in the Purāṇas, rivers are anthropomorphed into women*). She did not come. Angered, he threatened to split her and struck her with his Hala. Yamuna became white from then on. She appeared to him in the form of a woman, greeted him with a Namaskāra* and gave him gifts of clothing.

Both Duryōdhana and Bhīma had learnt fighting using a Gada. For some reason, just as Kṛshṇa was fond of the Pāṇḍavas, Balarāma was equally partial to Duryōdhana and the Kauravas. In addition to not approving his sister Subhadra's marriage to Arjuna,

he wanted to give his daughter Ṣaṣirēkha in marriage to Duryōdhana's son Lakshmaṇa. He did not succeed in that either.

Balarāma attended the wedding of Abhimanyu (*son of Arjuna and Subhadra; each of the Pānḍavas had at least one wife he did not share with his brothers, in addition to Draupadi, shared by all five*) in the city of King Virāṭa. Since the Pānḍavas, by then, completed the twelve years of exile and the year incognito (*the terms agreed to as their wager in the games of chance*), discussions were held regarding their future course of action. Balarāma agreed with Kṛshṇa's proposal of sending an emissary to the Kauravas to negotiate a division of the empire. Balarāma's position was that the Pānḍavas had lost everything by their gambling and that there was no injustice done by the Kauravas. He, therefore, insisted that the emissary sent to meet with the Kauravas should speak friendly words and not make any accusations of unfair dealings. Everyone else present was convinced that great injustice had been done to the Pānḍavas. Balarāma did whatever he could to stop war but failed. Not wanting to participate in the war between the Kauravas and Pānḍavas, he avoided it by going on a pilgrimage. During his travels, learning from Sage Nārada that a mace-fight was due to occur between Bhīma and Duryōdhana, he came to the battlefield, Kurukshētra. When he saw Bhīma hit Duryōdhana's thigh with his mace, he was angry that the rules of combat (*that prohibited a blow below the waist*) were violated and raised his Hala to hit Bhīma. Kṛshṇa (*who instigated the maneuver by Bhīma*) intervened and pacified His brother.

At the end of his pilgrimage, Balarāma entered the Naimiṣa forest (*where many Sages live and perform Tapas**). When they

saw him, all the Sages present rose to greet him except for Sūta. Quick to anger, Balarāma, saying "Low-class people who happen to receive an education become blinded by pride", Balarāma hit him with a blade of Darbha (*sacred grass with special power*). Sūta fell dead. The Sages cried out "You know that we gave Sūta the Brahmāsana (*position of highest honour*). Is it proper of you to act this way? If you, a great king, misbehave in this way, who can stop you? Receive Prāyaschitta (*atonement for your sin*) and protect Dharma (*the righteous path*)." Using his spiritual power, Balarāma brought Sūta back to life. Regretting his rash action in a moment of Tāmasa (*viciousness*), Balarāma asked the advice of the Sages on a course of action to atone for his sin. The Sages told him that an Asura named Palvala, son of Ilvala, was harassing them by destroying their Yāgas, and requested him to kill Palvala. Balarāma then killed the Asura.

After completing his tour of holy places of pilgrimage, Balarāma returned to the Naimiṣa forest, performed a Yāga there and then returned to Dwāraka. Not long after that, Kṛshṇa noticed several ill omens and sent His family and Yādavas (*cowherd dynasty*) to the holy place called Prabhāsa. He and Balarāma abandoned Dwāraka. Due to a Ṣāpa* received some time earlier (see **Sāmba**), all the Yādava warriors (*Yadu, Vṛshṇi, Bhōja, and Andhaka families*), killed each other. Balarāma's soul left his body and merged with the Supreme Being. Arjuna, who was searching for Balarāma, found his corpse and performed the funeral rites. Terminating his incarnation as Balarāma, Ādi Ṣēshu returned to Vaikunṭha (*Lord Vishṇu's heavenly abode*). *Bhāgavata*

'Bāla's – (*Sanskrit for 'boys'*). A Brahmin named Māndavya

ordered that a man is a boy until he reaches the age of fourteen and that no action by a boy shall constitute a sin on his record as a man. This happened as a result of Yama (*the God of Death*) punishing him by causing an open wound on his shoulder. When he asked Yama why he received such a punishment, Yama told him "You impaled butterflies while you were a boy." *Mahā Bhārata*

Bālavatsa – Mother of Satyavanta (*Husband of Sāvitri, who brought him back to life by tricking Yama, the God of Death*). Wife of Dyumatsēna. *Mahā Bhārata*

Bālāyani – Disciple of Bāshkali. He studied the Samhita* named for the Vālakhilyas. *Bhāgavata*

Bali I – An Asura* emperor, son of Prahlāda's son Virōchana. His wife was Aṣana. They had a daughter Ratnamāla and sons named Bāṇa, Dhṛtarāshṭra, Nikumbhanābha, and Vibhīshaṇa. Bali was righteous and never reneged on a promise. At the time, the Asuras were being harassed by the Dēvas, who were obstructing all their activities. Bali, therefore, attacked Indra's* city (*called Amarāvati*), intending to unseat him from his position. Afraid to face Bali at war, Indra sought the advice of Bṛhaspati (*Guru of the Dēvas*). When Bṛhaspati told him "You will not be able to fight him now. Leave the city and go away. You can get your position back with the help of Lord Vishṇu later", Indra abdicated his kingdom. But Tējas* and strength of the Asuras began to fade away. Bali asked Prahlāda (*his grandfather and a great devotee of Vishṇu in spite of the fact that almost all other Asuras consider Him their enemy*) why Asuras were becoming weak. When Prahlāda replied that it was due to the power of Vishṇu, Bali

arrogantly asked "Who is this Vishṇu? Are there not other Dēvas equal to Him? Have we not defeated them? What is so great about Vishṇu?" Prahlāda was offended by Bali's denigration of his idol and gave Bali a Ṣāpa* that he would be dethroned by Vishṇu.

The Dēvas went to Lord Brahma and complained that Bali took over all three worlds (*Swarga, or heaven; earth; and Pātāḷa, the netherworld*). Brahma and the Dēvas then went to Vishṇu and requested Him to protect them from Bali. Vishṇu took incarnation as Vāmana (*His fifth, and first fully human incarnation*) and went to Bali as a Brahmin mendicant (*in Purāṇic times, even some Asuras honoured Brahmins and gave them anything they sought*). Bali asked Him what He desired. Sage Ṣukra (*Guru of the Asuras*) warned Bali "This boy is no ordinary Brahmin. Do not give Him anything." But Bali refused to renege on his promise to give Vāmana whatever He wanted. Vāmana requested only three feet of land. Bali granted His wish. Vāmana enlarged His body tremendously, covered the earth with one foot, the sky with the other. There was no place to measure (*place*) a third foot. Bali hung his head, signaling that Vāmana should place a foot on it. Vishṇu placed His foot on Bali's head. Prahlāda then came and prayed to Him and said "Bali is devoted and has led a moral life. He does not deserve punishment." Vishṇu then pushed Bali down to the netherworld, Sutala. He declared that any Asuras who do not obey Bali will be punished. He Himself stood guard at Bali's door. Once, Rāvaṇa went to Pātāḷa to attack Bali. Bali saw him, greeted him saying "O! Rāvaṇa! come." He sat Rāvaṇa on his lap and asked him what he wanted. Not wanting to reveal his real reason, Rāvaṇa said "I heard that Vishṇu deceived you. Tell me where He

is." Bali told him that the one he saw at the entrance door was none other than Vishṇu and explained His greatness to Rāvaṇa.

Honouring a desire of Dēvaki to see her sons whom Kamsa had killed, Kṛshṇa and Balarāma went to Sutala. Bali greeted them and prayed to them. They told him the reason for their visit and with his permission, took the babies to earth to show to Dēvaki. *Bhāgavata; Uttara Rāmāyaṇa*

During the Manvantara (*reign as Manu**) of the Manu Sūrya Sāvarṇi, Vishṇu will give Bali the position of Indra. *Vishṇu Purāṇa*

Once, Bali lost all his power and was defeated by Indra. He took the form of a donkey and hid somewhere. Indra, riding his elephant Airāvata, found him in his hiding place and spoke insultingly to Bali. Bali said "It is just that it is a bad time for me. After all, did you not once abdicate your kingdom and hide in the form of a bee, because of the sin of killing a Brahmin?" *Mahā Bhārata*

Bali II – Son of King Sudēva. Once, while bathing in the Ganga river, Bali saw Dīrghatamas (*who was congenitally blind*) reciting Vēdic Hymns and being carried down by the flow. Recognizing him as a great Sage, Bali took him to his home. Bali requested the Sage to father Kshētraja* sons by his wife, Sudhēshṇa. He directed his wife to beget sons by Dīrghatamas. Sudhēshṇa was repelled by the appearance of the blind Sage and sent her maidservant to his bed in her place. The maidservant had several children by the Sage. Bali assumed they were born to his queen and raised them as his children. Dīrghatamas revealed the truth to the king that the children were born not to queen Sudhēshṇa, but to her servant.

The king requested Dīrghatamas again to beget children by his queen and persuaded her to sleep with the Sage. Five sons were born to Sudhēshṇa by Dīrghatamas and they were named Anga, Vanga, Kaḷinga, Puṇḍra, and Sunga. *Mahā Bhārata; Bhāgavata*

Bāṇa I – A king of the Sūrya (*solar; one of the two major royal lineages, the other being Chandra, or lunar*) dynasty. Son of Vikukshi and father of Anaraṇya. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Bāṇa II – An Asura*, son of Bali and his wife Aṣana. His city was Ṣōṇa Pura. He had one thousand arms. He worshipped Lord Ṣiva and requested Him to stay in his city so that no enemy will threaten it. Ṣiva and His Consort Pārvati came to his city and stayed. One day, he said to Ṣiva "I have not been able to find anyone capable of fighting me. My hands are itching for a fight against a worthwhile enemy. So, please fight me." Ṣiva told him "There is someone who can cure your itch for a fight. He will come and fight you when your flag falls down."

In a dream, Bāṇa's daughter Usha saw a handsome man making love to her, and blushing, told her friend and companion Chitrarēkha about her dream. Chitrarēkha brought portraits of all the princes of the land to help her friend Usha identify the prince of her dream. Usha recognised Aniruddha (*Grandson of Lord Kṛshṇa*) as her dream prince. Chitrarēkha went to Dwāraka and brought the sleeping Aniruddha without anyone's knowledge and put him in Usha's bedroom. Usha and Aniruddha were instantly attracted to each other and made passionate love. Usha became pregnant. Hearing that some man broke into his palace without his permission or knowledge, Bāṇa had Aniruddha arrested. Lord Kṛshṇa, learning of his grandson's plight, went to Bāṇa's city to

rescue him. Kṛshṇa asked Bāṇa to release His grandson. Bāṇa attacked Kṛshṇa. Kṛshṇa cut off Bāṇa's arms. As Kṛshṇa was about to kill Bāṇa, Ṣiva came and requested Kṛshṇa to let His devotee live. Bāṇa then gave his daughter in marriage to Aniruddha. *Bhāgavata*

Bandhu – Father of Tṛṇabindu and son of Vēdavanta. *Bhāgavata*

Bandhumanta – Son of Kēvala and father of Vēdavanta. *Bhāgavata*

Barhiṇāṣva – Son of Nikumbha and father of Kṛtāṣva. *Bhāgavata*

Barhishmanta – Son of Havirdhāna. He was always performing Yāgas and covered the earth with the holy Darbha grass. He thereby acquired the name Prāchīnabarhi. *Bhāgavata*

Barhishmati – Daughter of Prajāpati* Viṣvakarma and wife of Priyavrata. *Bhāgavata*

Bāshkala I – Son of Prahlāda (*Asura* and great devotee of Lord Vishṇu*). *Matsya Purāṇa*

Bāshkala II – Disciple of Sage Pyla. He divided the Ṛg Vēda he had learnt from his Guru into four parts and taught them to his disciples Bōdhya, Yāgjnyavalkya, Parāṣara, and Agnimitra. His son was Bāshkali. *Bhāgavata*

Bāshkala III – Son of Anuhlāda. *Bhāgavata*

Bētāḷa – (*Sanskrit for 'poltergeist'*) He was a leader of fiends and lived in a cemetery. In a previous life, he was King Pushpadanta. He became a Bētāḷa due to a Ṣāpa*. *Dēvānga Purāṇa*

Bhadra I – He and his brother Anubhadra were followers of Lord

Ṣiva. They engaged in fierce activities. Because their mother Diti made love to her husband Kaṣyapa at sunset (*only the night was considered the appropriate time for lovemaking*), they were born to her as Daityas (*synonym for Asuras**). *Bhāgavata*

Bhadra II – A resident of the city of Ayōdhya. His job was to periodically report on the incidents that took place in the city to Lord Rāma. One day Rāma asked him "What is being said about me by the people of Ayōdhya?" Bhadra tried to hide what he heard in the people's talk regarding Him from Rāma. But, when Ṣrī Rāma insisted by repeatedly asking about what transpired about him in the people's talk, Bhadra could not hide anymore that "People are criticizing the fact that He brought Sīta back to His residence." These words of Bhadra were the root cause for Rāma sending Sīta away to the forest. *Uttara Rāmāyaṇa*

Bhadra III – Daughter of Ṣrutakīrti. One of the eight wives of Lord Kṛshṇa. *Bhāgavata*

Bhadra IV – Wife of King Vyushitāṣva. Vyushitāṣva died before his wife had children. She cried bitterly over her husband's corpse, saying she could not live, not having sons to support her. Ākāṣavāṇi*, rising from her husband's corpse, announced "Contemplate your husband on the eighth day and fourteenth day after your period. You will beget children." She had children by following the instruction. *Mahā Bhārata*

Bhadra V – An actor. He pleased the Munis by his dance performances. They granted him the boon of Kāma Rūpa (*Sanskrit for 'shape-shifting ability'*). *Hari Vamṣa*

Bhadraka – Son of King Vasumitra and father of Puḷinda.

Bhāgavata

Bhadraṣīla – Son of Sage Gālava. He was King Dharmaṣīla in a previous life. *Mārkanḍēya Purāṇa*

Bhadrāṣva – Son of Āgnīdhra. The kingdom ruled by him was named after him as Bhadrāṣvavarsha. *Vishṇu Purāṇa*

Bhadrāvati – The kingdom ruled by Yauvanāṣva. *Jaimini Bhārata*

Bhadrāyu – Vajrabāhu, king of the country of Daṣārṇa had a wife named Sumati and other wives. While Sumati was pregnant, her jealous Sapatnis* drugged her. She gave birth to a son. But she and her son were sickly. Annoyed by their condition, Vajrabāhu abandoned them in the forest. She somehow managed to reach the home of a Vaiṣya* and was welcomed with respect by his wife. Then her son died. While she was engulfed in grief over her son's death, a Yōgi named Ṛshabha came to her and was trying to help her overcome the grief. She could not be consoled and asked him to help her kill herself. Taking pity on her, the Yōgi, using his spiritual power, covered the dead child's body with holy ash and brought him back to life. He named the revived boy Bhadrāyu. Bhadrāyu was growing up along with the son of the Vaiṣya. The Yōgi returned and taught Bhadrāyu a Mantra called Ṣiva Kavacha (*Sanskrit for 'Siva's shield'*) and gave him a sword named Chandrahāsa and a conch (*each great warrior had a conch with a distinct sound, which they used to announce their arrival on the battlefield*). Some time later, he learned that the king of Magadha had defeated Bhadrāyu's father in war and took his kingdom. With his friend, the Vaiṣya, as his chariot-driver and armed with

Chandrahāsa and the conch, Bhadrāyu defeated the king of Magadha and returned the kingdom of Daṣārṇa to his father (*appears that the father did not know the benefactor was the son he had abandoned*). He then returned to the Vaiṣya city.

The Yōgi Ṛshabha visited King Chandrāngada, narrated the story of Bhadrāyu and suggested that he give his daughter Kīrtimālini in marraiage to the young man. Chandrāngada accepted the suggestion, sent an invitation to Bhadrāyu and performed his daughter's marriage with him. He invited neighbouring kings to the wedding. Among them was Vajrabāhu, who, seeing the young man who won his kingdom back for him, informed everyone of that event, and asked whose son Bhadrāyu was. Chandrāngada described how he was Vajrabāhu's son, narrated the young man's history and brought Sumati out. Vajrabāhu expressed regret for his callous actions, took his wife and son back to his city and handed the kingdom over to Bhadrāyu.

One day, Bhadrāyu and his wife were resting in the shade of a tree after a stroll in the forest. Suddenly, a Brahmin came running, shouting "Help! Help!" Before Bhadrāyu could stand up, a woman was crying, being dragged away by a tiger. Bhadrāyu shot many arrows at the tiger, but the tiger did not release the woman and carried her away. The Brahmin looked at Bhadrāyu and berated him saying "You could not save a woman; where is the Chandrahāsa? What happened to the conch? Can a king be so incapable?" The king said "Here is my wife. This is my body. Over there is my kingdom. Please take whichever one of these you want." Impressed by the king's courage, the Brahmin told him "This is a Māya (*mirage*) I created." He then showed the woman

(*who was the Brahmin's wife*), who was unharmed, gave the king boons and went on his way. *Brahmānḍa Purāṇa*

Bhagadatta – Son of the Asura* Naraka. He ruled a country with Prāgjyōtishapura as the capital. He was devoted to King Pānḍu, but he allied himself with Jarāsandha, whom he feared. When Arjuna went out on a campaign of Digvijaya (*meaning 'Victory in all directions', tour of world conquest*), he fought Arjuna for eight days. Unable to defeat Arjuna, he said "I am a friend of Indra* and you are Indra's son. Why should we fight?" He made peace with Arjuna and gave him much wealth.

Bhagadatta fought in the Mahā Bhārata war as an ally of Duryōdhana. His father, Naraka had given him the Vaishṇavāstra, a powerful weapon he had been given by Lord Vishṇu. Bhgadatta employed that weapon against Arjuna in the Mahā Bhārata war. It was so invincible that, except Lord Kṛshṇa who saved Arjuna from its destructive power, no one else could face it. Bhagadatta fought the war riding Supratīka, an elephant. Arjuna then killed the elephant as well as Bhagadatta. *Mahā Bhārata*

Bhagīratha – Son of Dilīpa.

After the sixty thousand sons of Sagara died, their mourning wives prayed to Lord Vishṇu. Vishṇu appeared and told them "If you desire a son, put your menstrual discharge during your period into a new pot". They did accordingly. From that a boy emerged. That boy was Bhagīratha. Due to lack of contact with the virility of semen, Bhagīratha was weak and prone to frequent falls. Sage Ashṭāvakra (*human form with eight deformities*) who was passing by, witnessed the rising and falling unsteadiness of the boy's movement and mistook that as an attempt to ridicule him by

imitation. Not being sure, he wished inwardly that, "If it is an attempt to imitate my ugly form the boy should get burnt into ashes, if it is not for jest and ridicule, he should get transformed into a handsome boy." Accordingly Bhagīratha turned into a handsome, healthy boy. *Vichitra Rāmāyaṇa*

Bhagīratha came to know about the fate of the sons of Sagara (*his ancestors*) who turned into ashes. In order to give the ancestors a rise to the higher worlds, he worshipped Lord Brahma and received a boon from Him to live a life of free will without deviating from Dharma (*the righteous path*). Then he prayed to Ganga (*in the Purāṇas, rivers are anthropomorphed into women*), "Mother! Please descend down to earth and fulfill my desire." She agreed to do so, but cautioned him that when she descends with full force, nobody other than Lord Ṣiva can bear the impact. Then Bhagīratha performed Tapas* directed towards Lord Ṣiva, and requested Him to bear the impact of the celestial river when she descends to earth. Ganga descended from the sky onto Ṣiva's head and from there, fell onto the ground. Bhagīratha was leading Ganga to where the ashes of his ancestors lay. On the way, Ganga submerged the site where Sage Jahnu was performing a Yāga. Jahnu swallowed Ganga and kept her in his mouth. Bhagīratha begged Jahnu and got Ganga released. He then led her to his ancestors' ash heap. Thus, the ancestors were released from the ashes and ascended to Swarga (*heaven*). All the Sāgaras (*oceans*) got filled with water. Bhagīratha's wish was fulfilled. (*Any effort which overcomes insurmountable obstacles has come to be known as 'Bhagīratha Yatna'*). Bhagīratha's sons were Nābhāga and Ṣruta. *Bhāgavata; Brahma Purāṇa*

Bhajamāna I – Son of Sātvata. He had sons named Nimrōchi, Kankaṇa, and Vṛshṇi by one wife and sons Ṣatajit, Sahasrajit and Āyutajit by another wife. *Bhāgavata*

Bhajamāna II – Son of Andhaka. *Bhāgavata*

Bhallāda – Son of Udaksēna. He participated in the Mahā Bhārata war and was killed by Karṇa. *Mahā Bhārata*

Bhananda I – King of the country of Kanyākubja. He gave his daughter Kaḷāvati in marriage to King Vṛshabhānu. *Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa*

Bhananda II – Son of Nābhāga. His mother was Suprabha, daughter of a Vaiṣya*. Nābhāga, even though of a royal family, married a Vaiṣya girl and adopted the Vaiṣya lifestyle and conducted himself as a Vaiṣya. Bhananda approached his mother and asked her what work he should do for earning a livelihood. His mother replied "You look after the cows." Then Bhananda contemplated about the plight of the land – another form of a cow (*both are called "Gō" in Sanskrit*), which is under the occupation of enemy kings. With the intention of reclaiming the land occupied by enemies, he proceeded to the Himālayas, performed Tapas* and obtained the knowledge of wielding powerful weapons from Nīpu, a Rājarshi (*royal sage*). Then he approached Vasurāta – son of his father's younger brother and asked him to hand over half of the kingdom ruled by him. Vasurāta declined saying "Your father Nābhāga married a Vaiṣya girl and so he also became a Vaiṣya. So his son also should be considered to be a merchant, with no eligibility for ruling a kingdom. War ensued between Vasurāta and Bhananda which Bhananda won and then approached his father

Nābhāga with a request that the kingdom should hereafter be ruled by Nābhāga. But Nābhāga declined saying that he does not deserve to be a ruler and insisted that Bhananda rule as the king. *Mārkanḍēya Purāṇa*

Bhangāsvana – A king. Desirous of having sons, he performed a Yāga. Although the king's desire was fulfilled by way of being blessed with a hundred sons, the Yāga caused Indra* displeasure and anger against Bhangāsvana. While he was on a hunt, Indra deceitfully caused him to be confused and go much farther than he intended. As a result of his long walk, he was extremely tired and entered a nearby freshwater lake. By the time he came out of the lake, the king found himself transformed into a woman. Bhangāsvana was very much perplexed to find himself in a female form and he was so ashamed that he was reluctant to enter his own kingdom. He sent back his retinue with instructions that his sons be made the rulers of the kingdom. As a woman, Bhangāsvana stayed around Sages' Āṣrams in the forest. Among the forest dwellers one man fell in love with her and had several sons with her. These sons were also sent to the kingdom of Bhangāsvana with a directive that they be allowed to share in ruling the kingdom along with the sons sired by Bhangāsvana. All the sons joined together and became so powerful as to go on conquering neighbouring kingdoms.

Indra's rage against Bhangāsvana increased because of the reversal of the intended harm into a blessing. Indra, disguised as a Brahmin, went to Bhangāsvana's kingdom and created a rivalry between the sons born to him when he was a man and the sons to whom he gave birth as a woman. It led to infighting and mutual

killing of the two groups. This news of internecine warfare and mass extermination of the two groups of sons reached Bhangāsvana who was in the forest in female form. Bhangāsvana came and prostrated herself at the feet of Indra, disguised in the form of a Brahmin. The Brahmin revealed himself as Indra and offered to give boons to Bhangāsvana. She asked that her sons be restored to life. Indra asked "Which group of sons?" She unhesitatingly replied, "The sons for whom I was the mother. After all, a woman has greater love for her children than a man has for his." Indra was so pleased that he brought back to life both groups of sons, and also offered to restore Bhangāsvana to male form. Bhangāsvana preferred to remain female, saying sexual pleasure is greater for a woman than for a man. *Mahā Bhārata*

Bhānukōpa – Son of the Asura* Ṣūrapadma. *Skānda Purāṇa*

Bhānumanta I – Younger brother of Ṣrutāyu, king of the country of Kaḷinga. When Ṣrutāyu was battling Bhīma in the Mahā Bhārata war, Bhānumanta attacked Bhīma. Bhīma killed him. *Mahā Bhārata*

Bhānumanta II – Son of Khāṇḍikya and father of Ṣatadyumna. *Bhāgavata*

Bhānumati I – Daughter of Kṛtavīrya, wife of Ahamyāti and mother of Sārvabhauma. *Mahā Bhārata*

Bhānumati II – Wife of the Kaurava Emperor Duryōdhana. *Mahā Bhārata*

Bhara – Son of Ārshṭishēṇa (*a Muni, in whose Āṣram the Pānḍavas stayed for some time during their exile in the forest*).

Mahā Bhārata

Bharadvāja I – Son of Bṛhaspati (*the Guru of the Dēvas*). Bṛhaspati developed a lust for his brother's pregnant wife Mamata. Although she refused and even the fetus in the womb expressed disagreement, Bṛhaspati molested her forcefully and fulfilled his desire. The fetus inside the womb tried to push out the semen of Bṛhaspati, as there was no space for two fetuses. However a son took shape inside. Because he was the secondary fetus – not the primary, the parents said to each other "You bear his responsibility" for bringing up the child. Thus he became Bharadvāja (*Bhara is 'to bear' and Dvāja is 'secondary fetus' in Sanskrit*). Bṛhaspati and Mamata both left the child and went away. The Maruts (*wind Gods*) raised him. Bharadvāja's son was Manyu.
Bhāgavata

Once, as Dushyanta's son Bharata was performing a sacrifice for begetting children, Maruts took Bharadvāja to him and asked Bharata to adopt the child and raise him as his own. Because Bharadvāja prevented the Vitadham (*the breaking up*) of the lineage of Bharata, he was also called Vitadha.

Bharadvāja later conducted the sacrifice called Putra Kāmēshṭi Yāga*, performed by Bharata.

Bharadvāja was performing Tapas* on the banks of the Ganga river. One day he entered the river to have his bath. He saw the Apsara* Ghṛtāchi swimming in the water. Seeing her made him ejaculate spontaneously. Bharadvāja brought the semen and kept it safely in a pot. A son Drōṇa (*who grew up and became the archery Guru to the Kaurava and Pāṇḍava princes*) was born from the pot.

Once, Lord Rāma's brother Bharata, accompanied by a big army, went to the forest, hoping to persuade Rāma to return. On the way he reached the Āṣram of Sage Bharadvāja. Bharadvāja, wishing to provide a feast fit for a king and his retinue, prayed to Viṣvakarma* and to all the Dēvas. Viṣvakarma arranged comfortable accommodations for all the guests. The Dēvas provided all the food. Mountains of delicious food and desserts appeared magically. Dēva females served the feast. Apsaras entertained the guests with music and dance. Everyone who was there enjoyed a sumptuous feast unequalled anywhere else. *Mahā Bhārata*

Bharadvāja was one of the Saptarshis*. Rāma visited his Āṣram during His exile in the forest. Bharata also visited Bharadvāja's Asram to enquire about Rāma. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Bharadvāja II – Son of Satya and and her husband Ṣamyu. Brother of Bharata. His wife was Vīra. They had a son called Vīra. *Mahā Bhārata*

Bharadvāja III – Father of Avakrīta. When his son was killed by Raibhya, the grief-stricken father also sacrificed his life. When the Gods were pleased with Arvāvasu who performed a Yāga (*sacrifice*), they granted the boon of bringing Avakrīta and Bharadvāja back to life. *Mahā Bhārata*

Bhāradvāja – A holy place of pilgrimage. (See **Nārī Tīrthas***). *Mahā Bhārata*

Bharata I – Son of Ṣakuntala and King Dushyanta. Ṣakuntala gave birth to him while she was in the Āṣram of Sage Kaṇva. Even as a boy, Bharata was in the habit of putting under control all kinds

of animals and keeping them tied to a post. Since he was holding even wild animals, he was called the Sarvadamana (*Sanskrit for great subduer*). Bharata learnt all scriptures from the Sages in the Āṣram of Kaṇva. When Bharata came of age, Sage Kaṇva sent him along with his mother Ṣakuntala to his father, King Dushyanta. At first Dushyanata refused to accept Bharata as his son, but when Ākāṣavāṇi* asserted: "The boy is your son. Accept him" he changed his mind. Since Ākāṣavāṇi said Bhara (*Sanskrit for bear him*), the boy came to be known as Bharata. *Bhāgavata*

On the strength of Ākāṣavāṇi's words, Bharata was accepted by Dushyanta, who made Bharata his heir. Bharata expanded his kingdom many fold and founded royal lineages. He married Sunanda and a son Bhumanyu was born to them. *Mahā Bhārata*

Bharata had three wives who all had children. But since none of them was as capable as their father, the mothers killed their children. As a result, Bharata ended up with no children. When he was performing a Yāga, the Maruts (*wind Gods*) presented Bharadvāja to Bharata and asked the king to raise him as his own son. Bharata agreed to do as advised by the Maruts.

Bharata put Bharadvāja in household work instead of educating him in the study of the Vēdas. While thus engaged he was moving about like a Jaḍa (*simpleton*). As the son of Bharata he came to be known as Jaḍabharata. *Bhāgavata*

Three daughters and nine sons were born to Bharata, but they all died due to their mother's Ṣāpa*. Later, due to a Yāga that Bharadvāja helped Bharata perform, four sons named Suhōtra, Gaya, Karṇa, and Kapila were born to him. *Vichitra Rāmāyaṇa*

Bharata II – He was born to King Daṣaratha and his third wife

Kaikēyi. Daṣaratha performed a Yāga to beget children. The divine person who came out of the fire pit of the Yagjna, handed over a golden goblet containing rice pudding to Daṣaratha and asked him to distribute the rice pudding to his wives. Daṣaratha split it between his first wife Kausalya and his favourite (*third*) wife Kaikēyi. Kaikēyi gave half of her share to the second wife Sumitra. By the power of the rice pudding, Kaikēyi gave birth to Bharata and Sumitra gave birth to Ṣatrughna. Therefore, these two sons of Daṣaratha were always together. When Janaka gave Sīta in Marriage to Rāma, at the same time her father's brother also gave his daughter Māṇḍavi to Bharata. After the marriage both Bharata and Ṣatrughna went to the house of the maternal uncle of Bharata. Daṣaratha, in the meantime, arranged for the coronation of the eldest son Rāma as the crown prince. But Kaikēyi at the time decided to receive two boons granted to her earlier by Daṣaratha. Kaikēyi desired to send Rāma to the forest and make Bharata Daṣaratha's successor to the throne of Ayōdhya. Daṣaratha could not renege on his promise of the boons granted to Kaikēyi earlier. Accordingly, Rāma was exiled to the forest and with the parting of Rāma from the kingdom, Daṣaratha was grief stricken and fell dead. Bharata was not happy to ascend to the throne. He was, instead, very unhappy due to Rāma's departure from the kingdom. He blamed his mother as responsible for bringing about the sad situation. He performed the funeral rites of his father. Having no desire for the kingdom, he went in search of Rāma to the forest.

Bharata reached the river Ganga, where he encountered Guha – a great devotee of Rāma and a leader of the riverside community, who suspected that Bharata was on the war path to fight against

Rāma. He decided not to allow Bharata to go beyond Ganga. After Bharata explained to Guha that his mission was to plead with Rāma to return to the kingdom, he was allowed to cross Ganga to meet Rāma at Chitrakūṭa. He embraced Rāma and fell on His feet. Bharata pleaded for the return of Rāma to Ayōdhya to accept the kingdom, but Rāma was firmly determined to fulfil the promise made by His father. He insisted that Bharata rule the kingdom. Bharata made a magnanimous gesture by declining the throne (*but installing the wooden sandals of Rāma on the throne*), and performed the duties of looking after the kingdom as his agent. He did not want to go to Ayōdhya but instead went and stayed in the village of Nandigrāma.

Ṣrī Rāma having fulfilled his father's commitments, completed his forest dwelling at the end of which he fought the Asura* Rāvaṇa. He was on his homeward journey and informed Bharata about his return journey. Bharata went forward to welcome Rāma with full honour and returned with Rāma to Ayōdhya, where he crowned Rāma as the king. Bharata handed over all the responsibilities of the kingdom and performed whatever tasks he was assigned by Rāma. Bharata had two sons, Daksha and Pushkala.

One day when Rāma was in full court, Sage Gārgya came and reported that the sons of a Gandharva* named Ṣailūsha were causing trouble and that King Kēkaya requested that Rāma send forces to kill them. Rāma called Bharata and asked him to go with his sons. Bharata obeyed Rāma, took his sons and killed the enemies, followed by the coronation of his sons as rulers of his grandfather's kingdom. But he did not survive for long to enjoy

the fruits of his labours. After Lakshmaṇa had gone, he also followed Rāma to drown himself in the Sarayū river. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Bharata III – Son of King Ṛshabha. His mother was Jayanti. His brothers were Kuṣāvarta, Ilāvarta, Brahmavarta, Brahmāvarta, Āryāvarta, Malayakētu, Bhadrasēna, and Vidarbha.

Bharata married a girl by name Panchajani. They had sons named Sumati, Rāshṭrabhuk, Sudarṣana, Ācharaṇa and Dhūmrakētu. After Ṛshabha, Bharata ruled the kingdom known as Ajanābha. The kingdom came to be known later as Bharatavarsha named after Bharata. His brothers ruled different parts of Bharatavarsha. Those different parts were named after their respective rulers.

After Bharata ruled for several years, he handed over his kingdom to his sons and left for Tapōvana*. One day, while he was bathing in a nearby river, a fully pregnant deer happened to drink water from the same river. Suddenly, the sky was covered with dark clouds, which caused terrifying thunder. The deer got frightened and delivered a fawn out of fear of the sound and died on the spot. Bharata being an eye witness, took pity on the fawn and brought up the just born baby deer in his Āṣram. Although Bharata left his kingdom, wife and children, he developed fond attachment to the young deer. Towards the end of his life, in his last moment, he died thinking about the forlorn deer. Because of that, in his next birth he was born as a deer with full memory of his previous birth.

In the next life he was born as the son of a Brahmin named Angirasa. His step-brothers used to ill-treat him and blame him for everything. He was wandering like a mad man. At that time, King

Vṛshala of that kingdom wanted his servants to bring somebody to be given to Goddess Kāḷi as a human sacrifice. They brought one man, but he escaped. The servants who were searching for the escaped person, saw Bharata instead. King Vṛshala took him to Kāḷi temple to appease Kāḷi by killing him as a human sacrifice. Goddess Kāḷi appeared before the king and his servants and killed them all. She freed the Brahmin boy.

Bharata went about wandering aimlessly. Then he came upon Rahūgaṇa, the king of the country of Sindhu, who was going on a palanquin to Sage Kapila to study the philosophy of Vēdānta. The palanquin bearers spotted this able Brahman boy and put him to work bearing the palanquin bar, as they themselves were tired. One end of the bar was put on his shoulder. As he did not care for carrying the palanquin he was walking on uneven ground, causing uneasiness to the body of the king. The king became angry and harshly abused the Brahmin boy who replied "O! King! Abuse, praise and anger are all for this body only, but not the Ātma (*soul*)", which conveyed the essence of Vēdānta. The king got down from his palanquin and recognised him as a Vēdānti and greeted him with a Namaskāra*. Bharata attained Mukti* after these three births (*as a prince, a deer, and a Brahmin*).

Bharata's son, Sumati taught heterodoxy. *Bhāgavata*

Bharata IV – Son of Dhruvasandhi who belongs to the Sūrya (*solar; one of the two major royal lineages, the other being Chandra, or lunar*) lineage. Bharata had a son by name Asita. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Bharata V – Son of Satya and her husband Ṣamyu. Brother of Bharadvāja. He had a son named Bhārata and a daughter Bhārati.

Mahā Bhārata

Bhārata – (*earlier name of Mahā Bhārata*) A scriptural text of Hindu religion embodying the Sanātana Dharma (*ancient and eternal values*), written by Sage Vēda Vyāsa (*also known as Kṛshṇadwaipāyana*), for the welfare of mankind. He took three years to prepare the magnum opus and then to narrate it, sent Sage Nārada to Swarga (*heaven*), and Dēvala to Pitṛ Lōka (*world where the spirits of our ancestors live*), and the world of Asuras*. Sage Ṣuka was sent to Garuḍa Lōka (*the world of eagles*), and the worlds of Gandharvas* and Yakshas (*semi-divine beings with special magical powers*). Sumanta was sent to Nāga* Lōka and Vaiṣampāyana was sent to recite the epic poem before Janamējaya (*great-grandson of Arjuna*) in the world of humans. *Mahā Bhārata*

Bhārata Varsha – The land south of Himālayas. Earlier the land was called Ajanābha. The land has acquired the name Bhārata Varsha because it was ruled by Bharata, son of Ṛshabha. *Bhāgavata*

Bhārati – Daughter of Bharata and granddaughter of Ṣamyu. *Mahā Bhārata*

Bhārga Bhūmi – Son of Bharga, of the lineage of Kshatra Vṛddha. *Bhāgavata*

Bharmyāṣva – Another name of Haryaṣva. His sons were Mudgala, Yamīnara, Bṛhadisha, Kāmpilya, and Sṛnjaya. *Bhāgavata*

Bhavya – Son of Priyavrata, king of Ṣāka Dwīpa (*Sanskrit for 'island'*). *Mārkanḍēya Purāṇa*

Bhaya I – Sister of Kāla (See **Bhairavas**). Wife of Hēti and mother of Vidyutkēṣa. *Uttara Rāmāyaṇa*

Bhaya II – A Yavana (*corrupt form of Greek Ionian; originally meant Greek; became general term to denote a 'foreigner'*) king. Nārada told Kālaputri who was in search of a husband for herself, to go to him. She came to Bhaya and asked him to marry her. He declined saying "You are inauspicious. Nobody will marry you. You are like a sister to me. Please come with me. I will search for your husband." So saying, he along with his brother Prajvāra roamed the earth and finally arrived at the city where Puranjana lived. There, Punarjana became enamored of Kālaputri and fell under her influence. *Bhāgavata*

Bhēruṣēka – A king of the lineage of Krōshṭa. His son was Chitraratha. *Bhāgavata*

Bhikshu Tādita – A (*articulate*) dog. During the reign of Lord Ṣrī Rāma, His brother Lakshmaṇa was entrusted with keeping watch at the entrance door to the palace and bringing to Him anyone who wished to say something. One day, a dog, bleeding from the head, appeared with a complaint that a Bhikshu (*mendicant*) hit him on the head. Lakshmaṇa reported to Rāma that a dog has appeared at the entrance. Rāma gave instructions that the dog be brought before him. Lakshmaṇa called the dog, but the dog was hesitant saying "How can I come to a place where kings, Sages and Yatis (*ascetics*) are present?" Then Rāma Himself came out and asked the dog "Who hit you?" The dog showed the mendicant and said "He is the one who hit me". When the mendicant was asked what prompted him to abuse the dog, his reply was that the dog was in

the habit of obstructing his path to the place where he would rest, with a view to stealing the food that he procured from his daily rounds of begging. He pleaded guilty and said that he may be punished for an act done out of fear. Then Rāma asked the dog "In what way should the mendicant be punished?" The dog said "There is a hillock called Kālānjana on which there is a temple. Please appoint him as the temple authority". Rāma wondered "How can that be a punishment?" The dog said that in his previous birth, while performing the duty of manager of the same temple, he stole some money meant for the presiding deities and Brahmins. As a result, in his present life he took birth as a dog and further said "What greater punishment can there be for the offender?" Later the dog proceeded to Kāṣi, where he died and attained Mukti*. *Uttara Rāmāyaṇa*

Bhīma I – An Asura*, son of Kumbhakarṇa. He used to create trouble in all the three worlds. Lord Ṣiva killed him. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Bhīma II – King of the country of Vidarbha. He had no children for a long time. He eventually had sons Dama, Dānta, and Damana, and a daughter Damayanti by propitiating Sage Damana. *Mahā Bhārata*

Bhīma III – Kshētraja* son of Kunti, at the behest of her husband King Pānḍu, by Vāyu (*God of Wind*). On the tenth day after he was born, while his mother was carrying the baby in her arms and going to worship the Vana Dēvata (*Goddess of gardens and forests*), a tiger attempted to attack the mother, who out of fear lost hold of the baby. The baby fell on a boulder below. King Pānḍu lifted the baby, fearing injury to the new born, but he was

surprised to find that the baby was not injured. Instead, the rock on which he fell, was shattered to pieces.

After the death of King Pāṇḍu, Kunti took her sons and Mādri's sons to her in-laws' residence in Hastināpura. Bhīma used to play with other children including cousin Duryōdhana. In the course of the play Bhīma used to throw the sons of Dhṛtarāshṭra on the ground, drag them and sometimes immerse them in water. It was all done in a playful mood but not with the evil intent of hurting them. Even then Duryōdhana developed jealousy towards Bhīma. One day, when Bhīma was asleep, Duryōdhana tied his limbs and body together with ropes and threw him in a deep pool of water. Another time Duryōdhana made poisonous snakes bite him. But all the evil deeds could not hurt the diamond-hard physical body of Bhīma. Even though Duryōdhana was trying his best to harm him, Bhīma never suspected the evil intentions of an angry and jealous opponent in Duryōdhana.

Bhīma took for granted the straightforwardness of others without even an iota of suspicion that their intentions may be evil. Dhṛtarāshṭra asked the Pāṇḍavas to go on a visit to Kāṣi*. Bhīma and his brothers did not suspect any evil intent in the proposal of Dhṛtarāshṭra. He did not realize that the house built by Purōchana for their stay on the way to Kāṣi was made of (*flammable*) wax. Bhīma obeyed implicitly whatever his elder brother Dharmarāja asked him to do without criticism. He believed in the righteousness of his elder brother firmly, and that no harm will happen as long as he obeyed him.

Bhīma rescued his mother and brothers from the wax house. While the mother and brothers were sleeping, he stayed awake and

carried them on his shoulders without disturbing them, for their safety. When they were out of danger in the open forest, an Asura* woman by name Hiḍimbi fell in love with him and appeared before him in the guise of a beautiful woman decorated with appropriate ornaments, and declared her intense love for him. He ridiculed her. She promised to protect his mother and brothers taking care that no harm would come their way and begged him to fulfil her desire. Bhīma's pride was hurt at hearing a woman promising to protect his family as if he was not capable of taking care of his own. By that time her own brother the Asura Hiḍimba appeared on the scene and made loud threats. With the intention of fighting the Asura, Bhīma dragged him away from the place where his mother and brothers were sleeping so that their sleep will not be disturbed, and killed him on the spot. Afraid of looking at the ferocious Bhīma, Hiḍimbi stood still before him. Seeing the frightened Hiḍimbi, Dharmarāja woke up, took pity on her and ordered Bhīma to fulfill her desire. Then Bhīma agreed (*each of the Pāṇḍavas had at least one wife he did not share with his brothers, in addition to Draupadi, shared by all five)*. A son was born to them and was named Ghaṭōtkacha.

After that episode, following the instructions of Sage Vyāsa, the Pāṇḍavas went to a place called Ēkachakrapura, disguised as Brahmins. There, they took shelter in a Brahmin's house and lived on food obtained through alms. The Pāṇḍavas came to know about Bakāsura through the Brahmin host whose son's turn it was to be part of the meal for the Asura*. When Kunti came to know the plight of their host, she came forward with the proposal to send Bhīma in the place of a member of the Brahmin's family.

Bhīma took the boy's place and drove the cart to Baka. Not seeing Baka, Bhīma started to eat the food himself. Baka came, shouting loudly, and attacked Bhīma. The two engaged in hand-to-hand combat. Bhīma killed the Asura, dragged his body to the town to scare the other Asuras and released the town's people from their terror.

From Ēkachakrapura, the Pāṇḍavas proceeded to the capitol city of King Drupada. A Swayamvara* had been announced for the hand of Drupada's daughter Draupadi. The Swayamvara was based on a test with a setup called a Matsya Yantra (*meaning fish machine or mechanical fish*), a spinning wheel set up high over the floor with a small artificial fish attached to a point on the wheel. A pool of water was on the floor below the wheel and the test was to hit the fish while looking at the reflection in the pool, not directly at the fish. Arjuna, the third of the five Pāṇḍavas, hit the fish at the first shot looking at its image in the pool of water. He was the only archer who succeeded in doing so while all other contestants failed including Karṇa. Bhīma had no intention of participating in the contest. But out of jealosy, Karṇa and his allies, Duryōdhana, Ṣalya and Duṣṣāsana were preparing to attack Arjuna. Bhīma battled Ṣalya and humiliated him. The Pāṇḍavas headed home. Bhīma and Arjuna accompanied by Draupadi reached home first and they loudly announced that they brought Bhiksha (*alms*). Kunti in her usual way told them to share the Bhiksha equally. Bhīma was thunderstruck by his mother's declaration. When all the five brothers married Draupadi, he did not worry about the righteousness or otherwise of the marriage, but simply followed the bidding of his mother and eldest brother.

Apart from Draupadi and Hiḍimbi, Bhīma had another wife who chose him at her Swayamvara. Her name is Jalandhara with whom he had a son called Sarvaga. The son he and Draupadi had was called Ṣrutasōma. Bhīma had another son, Sarvagata, born to another wife Kāḷi.

The Pānḍavas stayed for some days in the capital city of Drupada. After a while Dhṛtarāshṭra invited them to Hastināpura and gave them half of the kingdom. When Dharmarāja ruled the kingdom for which they had built a capital city, Indraprastha, Bhīma used to help his brother in affairs of state.

When the Pānḍavas settled in Indraprastha, and Sage Nārada encouraged Dharmarāja to perform Rājasūya Yāga*, Bhīma had no comment. But when Lord Kṛshṇa pointed out that such a sacrifice gives them an opportunity to kill the evil kings like Jarāsandha, Bhīma was quite thrilled. To kill Jarāsandha, the trio Kṛshṇa, Bhīma and Arjuna entered the fort of the enemy disguised as Brahmins. When the Brahmins were asked by King Jarāsandha to name their desire, they told him they wished to fight him. He granted their desire and preferred to fight Bhīma who then killed him in a wrestling bout. Later, following Dharmarāja's instructions, Bhīma went on a tour of conquest of the kingdoms to the east and returned victorious, collecting tributes from several kingdoms including Puḷinda, Ayōdhya and Matsya in the form of much wealth.

In the Sabha (*court*) of Dharmarāja after subduing other kings in Rājasūya, Ṣiṣupāla started abusing Kṛshṇa. Bhīma became very angry and stood up with the idea of killing him. But Bhīshma restrained and calmed him down.

Duryōdhana became jealous of the wealth of the Pāṇḍavas and devised a plan to deceive the Pāṇḍavas and take away their kingdom. He invited them to a friendly game of dice. Dharmarāja started playing, assuming it was a fair game but lost his brothers, Draupadi and the kingdom. The game was played with dice biased to favour Ṣakuni, Duryōdhana's uncle. Bhīma was not too upset when he was lost, but was overwhelmed by anger and helplessness when Draupadi was dragged to the court and insulted. He took an oath that he will break the thighs of Duryōdhana as punishment for making gestures of ill-will signalling Draupadi to sit on his lap. At that moment he could not do anything because Dharmarāja lost him in the gambling. Dhṛtarāshṭra gave the kingdom lost in the dice game back to the Pāṇḍavas, but Dharmarāja lost every thing again in a second game of chance. Bound by the conditions which Dharmarāja had accepted for the second game, Bhīma and the others had to spend twelve years of Araṇyavāsa (*exile in the forest*) and a subsequent year of Agjnātavāsa (*incognito*).

While the Pāṇḍavas were proceeding to the forest according to the conditions laid down for the game of dice, their path was obstructed by the Asura Kimmīra who intended to kill them. Then Bhīma engaged the Asura in a fight using trees as weapons and killed him. Bhīma was not willing to lie low in the forest eating Kanda Mūla (*bulbous roots*) like Munis. He argued that like a true Kshatriya, they should wage war against Duryōdhana and win back their kingdom. But Dharmarāja said "We are bound by the oath taken in the full court and should abide by it. It is immoral to violate a deal we entered into voluntarily and disobey the rules of a game." When Dharmarāja expressed his firm opinion on the issue

of waging an immediate war, thereafter Bhīma never talked about war or kingdom. Like a lion in a cage, he was restrained by Dharma (*the righteous path*).

After spending some time in one forest, the Pāṇḍavas wanted to go to the neighbourhood of Gandhamādana mountain. Bhīma 'thought of'* his son Ghaṭōtkacha, who came accompanied by an army of Asuras and took the whole family there. On the way a beautiful flower carried by the wind fell in front of them. Draupadi was fascinated by the charming novelty of the flower and wanted some more flowers of the same kind. Bhīma went in search of them. On the way he came across a monkey blocking his way with his tail. To frighten the monkey, he roared aloud like a lion. He did not know that the monkey was none other than Hanumān (*his half-brother; they were both sons of Vāyu, the God of Wind*) who asked him "Is it proper for you to frighten small animals like us? Who are you? This forest is impenetrable for those who have not attained Siddha (*spiritual perfection*)." Then Bhīma said "I am the well-known strongman called Bhīma." Hanumān wanted to cure him of his vanity and said "I am old and cannot move. Please move my tail and go your way." Bhīma just extended his left hand carelessly with least regard for the weight of the object to be lifted and failed to lift the slender tail. He tried finally with all his might and full strength but still could not lift the tail. Then Bhīma understood that the monkey had to be an exalted personage. He prostrated before the monkey who revealed his true form as Hanumān and taught Bhīma some principles of statecraft. Hanumān offered to vanquish evil-minded Duryōdhana and his kin and hand over their kingdom to the Pāṇḍavas. But Bhīma said

“After the end of the period of forest life and incognito, even if they have to wage a war against Duryōdhana and his friends, there is none in the Kaurava group that could make the Pāṇḍavas need the help of Hanumān.”

Bhīma left Hanumān and was about to enter the pond to collect the flowers. The soldiers standing guard over the pond informed Bhīma that it belongs to Kubēra (*the God of Wealth*) and flowers cannot be taken without his permission. In their effort to dissuade him they tried to scare him. That did not discourage Bhīma from his intended purpose. The soldiers went and reported the matter to their king, who sent some more soldiers. Bhīma overpowered and killed some of them and gathered the flowers.

In the meantime, an Asura by name of Jaṭa deceived Dharmarāja. Under the pretension of serving the Pāṇḍavas he created confidence in himself and carried away Draupadi. Bhīma saw the attempted abduction and beat the Asura and killed him.

One day, Bhīma went to the forest on a hunt where he fell into the clutches of a giant serpent (*like a boa constrictor*). Bhīma struggled, in vain, to shake off the serpent’s hold on him. He was surprised to find the serpent to be stronger than himself. He realized it was not a mere serpent, but rather a great man (*serpents were one of the favourite creatures into which a person would be transformed by a Ṣāpa**). Then the serpent revealed that in his former corporeal existence, he was a Brahmin and that he was turned into a serpent because of a Ṣāpa. Then Bhīma engaged the serpent on theological topics of Vēdas and Upanishads to console him. It was strange that a man of action like Bhīma started philosophical musings. In the meantime Dharmarāja came to the

spot, answered all the questions raised by the serpent Nahusha holding Bhīma, and got him released from the serpent's hold.

Once, while Bhīma was wandering in the forest, some Kauravas came to him saying "Gandharvas* are tormenting us, please save us." Bhīma was happy because their enemies were getting tormented. But Dharmarāja wanted Bhīma to go and help the Kauravas. Then Bhīma defeated the Gandharvas and saved Duryōdhana and brought him to Dharmarāja. Duryōdhana was crestfallen because he went to the forest with the bad intention of mocking the Pāṇḍavas.

One day when Draupadi was alone, Saindhava (*brother-in-law of Duryōdhana*) happened to see her and overcome by lust for her, started to talk inappropriately with her. She reported the matter to Dhaumya, their Guru, who in turn made it known to Bhīma and Arjuna, who caught hold of Saindhava and humiliated him.

Once, during their sojourn in the forest, the Pāṇḍavas became very thirsty. The youngest of them, Sahadēva, went in search of water. As he did not return even after a long time, Nakula went after him. He also did not return even after a long time. Then Arjuna, followed by Bhīma, went in search of water. When Bhīma approached the lake, his three younger brothers were lying lifeless on the shore of the lake. When Bhīma was about to step into the lake to fetch some water, he heard Ākāṣavāṇi* say he must answer some questions before he quenches his thirst. Bhīma did not heed those words. Then he too fell lifeless like his brothers. Since none of them returned, Dharmarāja went in search of them. He anwered the questions of the Yaksha (*semi-Divine beings with special magical powers*) and brought his brothers back to life.

The Pānḍavas completed the stipulated period of Araṇyavāsa. Then they thought of what they should do next to stay incognito during the year of Agjnātavāsa. Bhīma decided to take the role of a cook. It is not known why he preferred to be a cook. He decided that even in the course of his job as a cook, he will remain true to his nature, for instance, cutting the firewood to pieces without the need of cutting devices. He followed Dharmarāja into the capital city of King Virāṭa. Although Virāṭa was prepared to appoint the disguised Bhīma as a high official, he said that he belongs to the fourth class of citizens and would perform the same job as he was doing in the employment of Dharmarāja. He joined the employment of Virāṭa bearing the name Valala. He used to cook the food and after the king has finished his meal, he used to serve the rest of the princely meal to his brothers and Draupadi. He impressed everyone by his mighty deeds of muscular power. To entertain the women in Virāṭa's Antahpura*, he used to grapple with powerful animals. Once, a wrestler appeared in Virāṭa's city and boastfully announced that there is none that can subdue him in a wrestling bout. Then Dharmarāja, under the name of Kanku in the court of Virāṭa, announced that Valala who is in the king's service can fight the challenger. Virāṭa accordingly arranged for a combat with the wrestler, who was promptly defeated by Valala.

One day Draupadi ran into Virāṭa's court, pursued by Kīchaka (*Virāṭa's brother-in-law*), complained that he was insulting her by his amorous advances, and begged the court for protection. Bhīma immediately uprooted a nearby tree intending to kill Kīchaka. But Dharmarāja restrained him.

That night Draupadi approached Bhīma and lamented about the

insults she was subjected to by Kīchaka. Bhīma assuaged her concern, saying that he could have killed Kīchaka on the spot, but for the restraint from Dharmarāja, who kept in his mind the greater danger of being exposed during the incognito year, which would make them repeat the entire thirteen-year cycle. However, Dharmarāja did agree to let Bhīma kill Kīchaka. But it had to be done in a clever way. Dharmarāja decided on a plan according to which Draupadi should behave as if she had come to terms with Kīchaka and suggest the place and time for a rendezvous. Bhīma would go there at the fixed time disguised as Draupadi. Kīchaka succumbed to the ruse and when he approached Bhīma in the garb of Draupadi, Bhīma attacked Kīchaka, wrestled with him and killed him silently. The next day Kīchaka's brothers Upakīchakas, bound Draupadi on the cart carrying the corpse of Kīchaka to the cremation ground. Then Bhīma uprooted some nearby trees and attacked the Upakīchakas, who ran away. Bhīma pursued them and killed them all.

In spite of all these amazing feats, he remained incognito. Virāṭa could not recognise him. But the Kauravas, hearing about Valala's exploits, developed a suspicion that Valala could be none other than Bhīma. In order to bring out the Pāṇḍavas from their hidden place the Kauravas planned an attack on Virāṭa by snatching away the kingdom's cattle and forcing them to assist Virāṭa who would come out to fight to recover his cattle. The plot failed and the Pāṇḍavas successfully satisfied the terms of their agreement.

When the Pāṇḍavas completed their incognito year successfully and started holding discussions as to what to do next, Bhīma did not participate in them. He decided to carry out the decision taken

by his elder brother. Finally it was decided to go to war against the Kauravas.

Bhīma's conch (*each great warrior had a conch with a distinct sound, which they used to announce their arrival on the battlefield*) was named Paunḍra. During the war Bhīma was not as much involved as Arjuna in entering deep into the enemy's armies. On the other hand he did not stay away far behind like Dharmarāja. The Kauravas were not keen on fighting Bhīma, instead concentrated on defeating Arjuna. Bhīma penetrated the Kaurava armies and battled Karṇa and Ṣalya. Bhīma, after he was defeated by Karṇa, joined Arjuna. When Drōṇa was in full swing attacking Pānḍava armies, Kṛshṇa and Arjuna could not contain him. Then Kṛshṇa advised that some responsible person in the Pānḍava army should announce (*falsely*) that Aṣvatthāma (*Drōṇa's son*) was dead. Arjuna did not agree to do that. Dharmarāja said that he will not utter a lie. Bhīma, not as scrupulous, announced loudly "Aṣvatthāma is dead". Drōṇa did not heed his words.

Bhīma killed Karṇa's son Satyasēna. He attacked Ṣalya and rendered him unconscious. Afterwards the sons of Dhṛtarāshṭra and Karṇa engaged Bhīma, who joined Arjuna. In the confusion of the combat, Duṣṣāsana advanced towards Bhīma, who was happy to face him. Bhīma had made a vow in the full court that he will tear open Duṣṣāsana's heart to avenge Draupadi's humiliation. Now the opportunity was presented to fulfil that oath. His countenance bore a fierce look while killing Duṣṣāsana. After tearing open Duṣṣāsana's heart, he drank some of the blood and applied some to Draupadi's hair (*Draupadi had vowed that, her*

hair having been defiled by Duṣṣāsana's touch, she would not dress it until Duṣṣāsana's blood was applied to it).

After Karṇa and Ṣalya were slain in the war, the major part of the Kaurava army ran helter skelter. Duryōdhana entered a deep lake and hid. The Pānḍavas went in search of him and after finding his hiding place they cajoled him to act in a manly fashion. Duryōdhana agreed to come out of his hiding place and fight. He chose Bhīma to engage him in a fight using Gadas (*maces*). According to the oath taken by Bhīma in the full court when Duryōdhana insulted Draupadi by making gestures showing his lap for her to sit on, and according to the advice of Kṛshṇa, Bhīma broke Duryōdhana's thighs in the fight and killed him. It is against the rules of mace fight to strike a mortal blow below the waist of the opponenets. Balarāma saw that, became angry and lifted his plough against Bhīma. But Kṛshṇa pacified him.

After the war was over, the Pānḍavas went to see Dhṛtarāshṭra, who made a pretence of showing his love towards Pānḍavas, and made advances to embrace all of them. When it came to the turn of Bhīma to be embraced, Kṛshṇa pulled him aside and put forward a statue made of iron. The congenitally blind Dhṛtarāshṭra believed the statue to be Bhīma, and crushed it to powder in his embrace. It showed the intensity of anger he had towards Bhīma who had killed his sons.

After the war was over, Dharmarāja became the king. Bhīma used to help his elder brother in matters of state. When he came to know through Arjuna about the demise of Kṛshṇa, Bhīma also did not want to stay in the kingdom. All the Pānḍavas and Draupadi left the city and proceeded northwards towards the Himālayas on a

Mahā Prashthānam (*journey of no return*). On the way Draupadi fell lifeless on the wayside followed by Sahadēva, Nakula, and Arjuna. Bhīma also lost his life and fell on the way and reached Swarga (*heaven*). *Mahā Bhārata*

Bhīmaka – King of the city of Kunḍina. Rukmiṇi (*Lord Kṛshṇa's Consort*) was his daughter and Rukmi, Rukmadhara, Rukmabāhu, Rukmakēṣi and Rukmanētra were his sons. *Bhāgavata*

Bhīmaratha II – Son of Kētumanta. He had a son named Dyumanta who was known later as Divōdās. *Bhāgavata*

Bhīmasēna I – A Gandharva*. His mother was Muni. *Mahā Bhārata*

Bhīmasēna II – Younger brother of King Janamējaya (*great-grandson of Arjuna*). Once, when a (*articulate*) dog came near where Janamējaya was performing a Yāga named Sattra, he beat it. The dog's mother came, and in a sad voice said, "Sir, your brother thoughtlessly beat my weak, defenceless son." *Mahā Bhārata*

Bhīmasēna III – Son of Anaṣva's son Parīkshit (*different from Arjuna's grandson*). He and his wife Kumārika had a son named Pratiṣravas. *Mahā Bhārata*

Bhīshma – In an earlier life he was a Vasu (*a demi-God*) by name Prabhāsa (see **Prabhāsa**).

Bhīshma was born as the eighth son of Ganga (*in the Purāṇas, rivers are anthropomorphed into women*) and King Ṣantanu. Unlike his brothers who were thrown into the running river Ganga, the eighth son was saved from Ganga by Ṣantanu after blaming her for her inhuman behaviour. Ganga put this child in the care of her

husband after letting him know the antecedents of the child, and left the husband. Bhīshma learnt all the Vēdas and Ṣāstras from Sage Vasishṭha. He equalled Paraṣurāma in knowledge of weapons and military science, reached the same level of self-knowledge as the Sanatkumāras and became as much of an exponert as Bṛhaspati (*Guru of the Dēvas*) in all the Ṣāstras. Ṣantanu crowned him as the heir apparent to the throne.

One day, Ṣantanu happened to see Matsyagandhi, daughter of Dāṣarāja (*chieftain of a fisherman community*), desired her, and was despondent due to the obstacles to making her his wife. Ṣantanu went to Dāṣarāja and asked for Matsyagandhi's hand in marriage. Dāṣarāja said he would gladly oblige if Ṣantanu agreed to make her son the next king. Ṣantanu returned home disappointed and sad because he could not make that promise. His son Bhīshma, on learning the reason for his father's distress, went to Dāṣarāja and vowed that he will not seek to succeed to the throne and that he will ensure that Matsyagandhi's son will become Ṣantanu's successor (*and that he will remain a bachelor for life to make sure that he will have no sons that might seek the throne, either*). Dāṣarāja then performed the marriage of Matsyagandhi (*known also as Satyavati*) to Ṣantanu. Bhīshma carried her on a golden chariot and handed her over to Ṣantanu. At his father's request, he promised to protect the honour and good repute of the Kuru empire regardless of who the ruler was. This was the driving principle of Bhīshma's life and the prism through which his actions and failures to take action must be seen to be understood. The father was highly pleased and granted a boon to Bhīshma that he will have the right of Svacchanda Maraṇa (*death will come to*

him only when he wishes it).

Satyavati and Ṣantanu had two sons, Chitrāngada and Vichitravīrya. Ṣantanu passed away when they were small children. Bhīshma put Chitrāngada on the throne and coronated him as the king. However, Chitrāngada was killed soon after by a Gandharva* of the same name. Then Bhīshma put Vichitravīrya on the throne and since he was only a child, Bhīshma looked after the welfare of the country as the regent of the state. When Vichitravīrya came of marriageable age, Bhīshma was in search of a suitable bride for the king. Bhīshma came to know that the king of Kāṣi* announced a Swayamvara* for his daughters, went there and secured all three daughters as brides for his half-brother. The princes who came as suitors for the Swayamvara were prepared to fight Bhīshma for the princesses but they were all defeated including Sālva who advanced farther than the other princes. Bhīshma shot a rain of arrows and defeated Sālva. Bhīshma carried all the three daughters of the king of Kāṣi to Hastināpura. Of the three daughters, the eldest, Amba, informed Bhīshma that she and Sālva were in love with each other and had intended to marry. Bhīshma let her go to Sālva and arranged a grand marriage of Ambika and Ambālika with Vichitravīrya.

Amba went to Sālva, true to her love, but he did not reciprocate that love because she was taken away by Bhīshma. Amba then returned to Hastināpura and asked Bhīshma to either marry her himself or let her marry his half-brother. Bhīshma refused to marry her because of his vow to remain a bachelor his whole life and said she is ineligible to marry his brother (*the future emperor of the Kuru empire*) because she had another in her heart. She went

to the forest looking for a suitable place to perform Tapas*. She saw Paraṣurāma there and sought his intervention to have justice done to her. Paraṣurāma accompanied her to Bhīshma and demanded that either Bhīshma or Vichitravīrya marry her. With all his reverence towards Paraṣurāma his Guru, Bhīshma could not honour the proposal, even for the sake of Vichitravīrya, because she was already in love with Sālva. Paraṣurāma could not accept the refusal by Bhīshma and challenged him to a duel to redress the wrong done to Amba. Bhīshma and his Guru fought for a number of days but neither was yielding to the other. At one stage Bhīshma sensed that he was getting overpowered. He prayed to the Vasus (*his older brothers in his previous life*) for help. They appeared in his dream (*even the most bitter fight stops at sundown to be resumed the next morning, according to the military protocols of the time*) and gave him a novel weapon called Mōhanāstra (*Mōhana is Sanskrit for 'stupefying' or causing loss of consciousness*). In the next day's fight Bhīshma was contemplating the use of the new weapon on Paraṣurāma. At that moment Sage Nārada appeared before Bhīshma and advised him to desist from the drastic move to hurl the new weapon against his revered Guru. Celestial beings like Dēvas and Sages, including Bhīshma's mother Ganga, intervened. Sage Jamadagni, Paraṣurāma's father also advised his son to calm down. They stopped fighting and Bhīshma went to Paraṣurāma. Bhīshma paid homage to his Guru, prostrating before him. Paraṣurāma embraced and blessed Bhīshma and left for Mahēndra Giri with the other Sages.

Vichitravīrya died childless. Satyavati, worried that the Kuru dynasty would end, wanted Bhīshma to beget children. But he

clung to his vow of celibacy and declared that he would not violate it. In order to preserve the Kuru dynasty on a permanent basis befitting Kshātra Dharma (*the duty of a military race*), he decided upon a procedure prescribed by the Ṣāstras. He explained to her other instances and gave precedents, and convinced her citing the example of Dīrghatamas, and convinced her to allow the acceptable Kshetraja* procedure.

Sage Vyāsa was invited by Satyavati (*his mother*) to perform the procedure. Ambika and Ambālika gave birth respectively to Dhṛtarāshṭra and Pānḍu Rāja, by Sage Vyāsa. Bhīshma made the congenitally blind Dhṛtarāshṭra the king and looked after the kingdom as regent with Vidura (*Dhṛtarāshṭra's half-brother*) helping in state affairs. He wanted to perform the marriage of the princes and thus make sure that the Kuru dynasty will have enough progeny. He came to know that princess Gāndhāri was bestowed with the boon of giving birth to one hundred children. So he sent word to her father who agreed to give Gāndhāri and her sisters to Dhṛtarāshṭra in marriage, who accordingly married the princesses of Gāndhāra followed by the marriage of Pānḍu Rāja with Kunti and Mādri. After the death of Pānḍu Rāja, his (*Kshētraja*) children were brought by Bhīshma to Hastināpura. Bhīshma arranged for education of the same high standard for the sons of Dhṛtarāshṭra as well as those of Pānḍu Rāja.

The enmity developed by the children even at an early age became quite evident in the course of the play of games. Arjuna was expert in Dhanurvidya (*archery*) and in order to keep the balance of forces, Duryōdhana befriended Karṇa, another expert archer, by making him the king of the country of Anga. With the

intention of harming the Pāṇḍavas, Duryōdhana and Dhṛtarāshṭra asked them to go to Vāraṇāsi (*present-day Benares, also known as Kāṣi*). It is not clear why, with all these events happening around him, Bhīshma remained passive. When he learned that the Pāṇḍavas had married Draupadi and were staying comfortably in King Drupada's home, Dhṛtarāshṭra consulted Bhīshma for ideas on how to hurt them. Enraged by Dhṛtarāshṭra's evil intent, Bhīshma scolded him and told him that the Pāṇḍavas cannot be defeated. Changing tactics in view of Bhīshma's reaction, Dhṛtarāshṭra summoned the Pāṇḍavas to Hastināpura and gave them half his kingdom. Dharmarāja built the city of Indraprastha and ruled his portion of the kingdom from there. Bhīshma, in furtherance of his promise to his father, decided to stay in Hastināpura, which remained the capital of the Kuru empire.

When Dharmarāja performed the Rājasūya Yāga*, Bhīshma gladly accepted the invitation to attend it. He was quite happy that his grandchildren have grown in stature. In the assembly of kings in the Rājasūya, Dharmarāja asked Bhīshma "Of all the high personages who attended this grand function, who is the exalted person of high esteem that deserves worship by all?" Without hesitation Bhīshma replied "None other than Ṣrī Kṛshṇa." Ṣiṣupāla became furious at Bhīshma's suggestion and started abusing openly both Bhīshma and Kṛshṇa. Bhīshma remained calm.

Duryōdhana developed jealousy at the glory of Dharmarāja. In order to cheat the Pāṇḍavas, he invited them for a game of chance. Dharmarāja played and made unprecedented and extravagant wagers. Dharmarāja even staked Draupadi and lost. Duryōdhana openly insulted her. Duryōdhana won the kingdom of the

Pāṇḍavas (*using Ṣakuni and his charmed dice*). The terms of the wager required the losers to spend twelve years of exile in the forest and one year incognito. Even then Bhīshma did not intervene to raise an objection at the unfairness of the play and the high unusual stakes enforced by Duryōdhana and the insult meted out to Draupadi. He did not remonstrate with Duryōdhana. He was basically abiding by his promise to his father that he will uphold the status and prestige of the empire, and therefore, of the current emperor. On the other hand, he did not approve what Duryōdhana did. Duryōdhana and his father did not keep him informed about their line of thinking. Bhīshma, however, would not leave the house of Dhṛtarāshṭra, bound as he was by his vow to protect the Kuru empire. When the Pāṇḍavas entered the incognito year, he along with Duryōdhana and others, thought about ways and means of exposing the Pāṇḍavas (*which would impose a new twelve years in the forest and one year incognito*). He also participated in Gōgrahaṇa (*seizing the cows*) of King Virāṭa, in whose kingdom the Pāṇḍavas were suspected to be hiding, as a means of achieving this objective. He affirmed that the charioteer of Prince Uttara could be Arjuna. He disabused the hope of the Kauravas that the Pāṇḍavas had been prematurely exposed during the Agjnātavāsa (*incognito*) phase. Bhīshma assured that the due date had passed, unnoticed due to the vagaries of the lunar calendar. In that encounter Arjuna won the battle.

The Pāṇḍavas successfully completed the required period of Agjnātavāsa. Dharmarāja took the initiative to make peace and sent an emissary to Hastināpura. Dhṛtarāshṭra sent Sanjaya (*his most devoted and trusted counselor*) to Dharmarāja on a similar

mission. But, Duryōdhana was not at all willing to make peace. Karṇa was supporting Duryōdhana in his evil plans. Bhīshma held Karṇa responsible for the deterioration of the situation (*most likely due to Karṇa not being of royal lineage, at least as known at the time*). In the Kaurava Sabha (*court*), whenever Karṇa opened his mouth, Bhīshma was finding fault with him. Because of the frequent remonstrances aimed at him by Bhīshma, Karṇa made a vow that as long as Bhīshma was participating in the war, he will not take up arms and enter the battlefield. Bhīshma entreated Duryōdhana in many ways to avoid war and make peace with the Pāṇḍavas. But his words were not heeded.

Finally, war was declared. In that war Bhīshma was made the first commander-in-chief of the Kaurava armies. Although Bhīshma tried his best to prevent war, once the decision was made by Duryōdhana, he committed himself fully without hesitation to fight the Pāṇḍavas. Moreover, he assured Duryōdhana that there is no cause to fear the Pāṇḍavas as long as he, Bhīshma, was in charge.

On the battle field in Kurukshētra, both the armies were configured in elaborate Vyūhas*. The war did not yet begin. At that time Dharmarāja approached Bhīshma barefooted, as a mark of respect. He stood before Bhīshma and saluted him with a Namaskāra*. Pleased greatly by Dharmarāja's gesture, Bhīshma blessed him and asked him to choose any boon other than for Bhīshma to fight on the Pāṇḍavas' side.

Although Bhīshma was very fond of the Pāṇḍavas, once the war started, he fought them as if they were his born enemies. He killed the warriors like Ṣatānīka and others fighting on the Pāṇḍavas'

side. He was fighting with all his might for the victory of Duryōdhana. Even then, Duryōdhana did not trust him fully and was disappointed that so many days have passed in the war but Bhīshma did not yet kill Arjuna. Therefore he asked Bhīshma to step aside so that Karṇa could enter the battle. These words pained Bhīshma. But he did not stop fighting and kept attacking and demolishing the Pāṇḍava armies fiercely. At one stage the Pāṇḍavas were afraid that it is impossible to defeat Bhīshma. They consulted Kṛshṇa. Since Bhīshma had earlier offered the Pāṇḍavas a boon, the Pāṇḍavas walked down the distance to his tent, secretly in the night. He asked them "What brings you here?" They explained that they wanted his advice on how to win the war. He told them that as long as he remains armed, Pāṇḍavas will not win, but he told them the secret of the method by which he can be neutralized. The next day when they again battled Bhīshma, they followed his plan and put Ṣikhanḍi (*born female but changed to a male by the magic of a Siddha – semi-divine being with special magical powers*) in Arjuna's chariot. Arjuna was actually shooting arrows from behind Ṣikhanḍi. As soon as Bhīshma saw Ṣikhanḍi, he threw down his bow and arrows. Tired after fighting for ten days, he got hurt by Arjuna's arrows and fell from his chariot with his head facing east. On Lord Kṛshṇa's advice, Arjuna created a bed of arrows for Bhīshma to lie on and wait for an auspicious time to exercise his right to choose the time of his death.

At the sight of Bhīshma's plight on the battlefield, the Dēvas in heaven were very sad. Some of them came in the form of swans and informed him that the time of year then was Dakshiṇāyana (*the period between the Autumnal and Vernal Equinoxes*). Since

Bhīshma's father had blessed him with the boon of Swacchanda Maraṇa (*that death will happen as and when he wishes*), he wished to postpone death till Uttarāyaṇa (*period between Vernal Equinox and Autumnal Equinox*). The Pānḍavas gathered around the fallen Bhīshma. Karṇa also forsook his anger and requested a truce with Bhīshma. Somebody suggested orthopaedic treatment. Some others said they will keep him happy by performance of entertainments. Some people fetched him silk-lined cushions to lean on. Bhīshma refused all the facilities offered. He wanted fresh and pure water brought from deep within the earth by piercing the earth with Arjuna's arrow. He drank the Ganga water. He was resting his body on the bed of arrows while Pānḍavas and Kauravas were attending to his needs. Kṛshṇa encouraged Dharmarāja to go before Bhīshma and learn Dharma (*righteousness*) and requested Bhīshma to impart that knowledge to Dharmarāja. Kṛshṇa bestowed on Bhīshma boons that would keep the body resting on the bed of arrows free of pain, hunger, thirst, and also to keep his mind exalted in a divine state.

Bhīshma imparted the knowledge that would help Dharmarāja lead a shining moral life. There was no worldly or spiritual subject untouched by Bhīshma in that dialogue. After a few days, it was Uttarāyaṇa. Bhīshma left his mortal body and returned to Swarga (*heaven. He was a Vasu who had to be born on earth due to a Ṣāpa**). *Mahā Bhārata*

Bhṛgu I – A Muni, born from Lord Brahma's heart. He had a son, Kavi, and a daughter Dēvavarṇini. He gave his daughter in marriage to Viṣvavōbrahma.

Once upon a time, Sage Bhṛgu left his wife Pulōma in Agni's

home with a request that he take care of her, and went somewhere. While she was in Agni's home, an Asura* named Pulōma came there and asked Agni whose wife she was. Knowing of Sage Bhṛgu's nature, Agni was afraid that he would be punished with a Ṣāpa* if he revealed who she was but he was also concerned that he would be guilty of lying if he pleaded ignorance of something he did know. Deciding in favour of telling the truth, he revealed that she was Bhṛgu's wife Pulōma. The Asura, saying she was originally betrothed to him before Bhṛgu married her, took the form of a wild boar and carried her away. She escaped from the Asura when her son Chyavana killed him, went home and told her husband everything that happened. Feeling that Agni should have prevented his wife's mishap, Bhṛgu in his anger, gave Agni a Ṣāpa that he would be a cruel being that consumes everything. *Mahā Bhārata*

Once upon a time, during a war between the Dēvas and Asuras, the Asuras hid behind Sage Bhṛgu's wife. Vishṇu, realizing this, killed Bhṛgu's wife. In her dying moments, she gave Vishṇu one of those Ṣāpas He collected, saying "Not only will you suffer separation from your spouse but you will also suffer through many incarnations in various bodies." As a result, He endured forced separation from His wife in his Rāma Avatāra. *Dēvī Bhāgavata*

Once upon a time, an argument arose among the great Sages as to who, among Brahma, Vishṇu, and Ṣiva can grant Mukti*. They sent Sage Bhṛgu to investigate and determine the answer. The Sage went first to Brahma. Bhṛgu sat down before Brahma invited him to sit. Brahma scolded him for breach of protocol. Bhṛgu countered with a Ṣāpa that Brahma will not be eligible to be

worshipped in the world, saying "Your nature is Rajōguṇa (*emotional and passionate*). Therefore, you are unable to grant Mukti." When he next went to Lord Ṣiva's abode, Ṣiva and His Consort Pārvati were engaged in lovemaking. Ṣiva chided him, asking "Why did you enter our private quarters without seeking permission first?" Bhṛgu gave Ṣiva a Ṣāpa saying "Your primary nature is Tamōguṇa (*darkness or ignorance*). You will be ineligible for worship in your real form." When Bhṛgu finally visited Vishṇu, Lakshmi was on Vishṇu's chest. Seeing the Sage, Vishṇu pushed Lakshmi aside, stood up and greeted Bhṛgu with a Namaskāra*. Bhṛgu kicked Vishṇu, who did not get angry but instead, begged the Sage to forgive Him (*there is a story that Bhṛgu was extremely arrogant because he had an eye on the bottom of one foot; when he kicked Vishṇu, He plucked the eye from the foot and Bhṛgu lost his arrogance*). Bhṛgu returned to the Munis and reported that Vishṇu is the one who can grant Mukti. (*Vēnkaṭāchala Māhātmyam is a 'Sthala Purāṇa*'*.) *Vēnkaṭāchala Māhātmyam*

Bhṛgu II – A Muni. Once, he went to his father, Varuṇa (*the God of Rain*) and asked him to teach the method of recognizing Brahma*. He learnt from his father that food is Brahma, life is Brahma, eyes are Brahma, and that happiness is Brahma. *Aitarēya Upanishad*

Bhṛgu III – A Brahmin. He lived in the city of Mahāpadma, on the southern shore of the Bhāgīrathi river (*another name for Ganga, after Bhagīratha, who was instrumental in bringing it to earth*). He lived by the strict code of Dharma (*righteous path*). He was always truthful. However hard he tried, though, he was unable to understand the nature of the soul. A guest once told him that he

would be able to learn it from a Nāga* king named Padma. Bhṛgu went to his house once, seeking to learn from him the nature of the soul. Padma was not home at the time. Bhṛgu waited for him at the Naimiṣa forest. When Padma returned home, he asked his wife if guests or visitors were receiving respect and hospitality. She told him that a Brahmin had been waiting for him. Padma went to Bhṛgu and paid his respects. Bhṛgu asked him to describe anything special that he happened to see. Padma said "Sūrya causes rain and also makes water evaporate. He gives food to people but also makes them shrivel up. All power is in him. Is it not amazing? I am in you and you are in me. The whole world is in us. Stop worrying." Bhṛgu, on hearing this, realized all beings are the same and said to Padma "You have described the nature of the soul. That is all I wanted", and left. *Mahā Bhārata*

Bhṛṣāṣva I – A Prajāpati*. He married Jaya and Suprabha, daughters of Daksha Prajāpati. Each of his wives had tens of sons. The sons became Astras (*Sanskrit for 'weapons', generally deployed by the chanting of secret Mantras. Each Astra does a different kind of harm to their defined target*). Sage Viṣvāmitra, by his Tapas, acquired them all. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Bhṛṣāṣva II – Sage Viṣvāmitra's archery Guru. *Uttara Rāmāyaṇa*

Bhumanyu – Son of Bharata and grandson of Dushyanta. His mother was Sunanda, wife Vijaya, and their son was Suhōtra. *Mahā Bhārata*

Bhūmi Dēvi – (*Sanskrit for 'Goddess Earth'*) When Lord Vishṇu was in Yōga Nidra (*sleep between epochs*), she approached Him, full of lustful desire. Vishṇu was pleased and gave her boons. She

desired that the weapon bearing the power of Vishṇu, Vaishṇava Astra, be given to her son Naraka with the means of deploying it. *Bhāgavata*

Bhūri – A king of the the lineage of Bṛhadratha. He was afraid of Paraṣurāma and hid himself on Gṛdhra Kūṭa (*the mountain where vultures flock*). *Mahā Bhārata*

Bhūriṣrava – King of the country of Bāhlika. He was born to Sōmadatta as the result of a boon. He fought on the side of Kauravas in the Mahā Bhārata war and defeated and kicked Sātyaki (*close friend and constant companion of Lord Kṛshṇa*). But, Sātyaki again attacked and killed him. *Mahā Bhārata*

Bhūtajyōti – Son of King Sumati who belongs to the Nṛga lineage. His son was Vasu. *Bhāgavata*

Bhūtasantāpana – Son of the Asura Hiraṇyāksha. *Matsya Purāṇa*

Bhuvanēṣa – A king. In his kingdom, a Brahmin by name Harimitra was always singing the glories of Vishṇu. The king wanted to have his fame spread, and asked the Brahmin to sing about his glory. The Brahmin refused. The king punished him by way of removing the idols he was worshipping and threw them away. The king took birth as an owl in his next birth as a result of his misdeed. (see **Gānabandhu**). *Rāmāyaṇa*

Biḍāla – A soldier in the employ of the Asura* Mahisha. He battled Dēvi (*the Supreme Being*) and was killed by Her. *Dēvi Bhāgavata*

Bilvaka – Son of Kadruva. A Nāga*. *Mahā Bhārata*

Bilvapāṇḍura – Son of Kadruva. A Nāga*. *Mahā Bhārata*

Bindu Sarōvara – When Swāyambhu Manu* (*the first of 14 Manus*) was searching everywhere for a bridegroom for his daughter, he was so happy on seeing Kardama that his Bindu (t*ears*) of happiness became a Sarōvara (*lake*). That lake is Bindu Sarōvara. *Bhāgavata*

Bindumati – Daughter of Ṣaṣibindu and wife of Māndhāta. Purukutsa, Ambarīsha, and Muchikunda were their sons. *Vishṇu Purāṇa*

Bindusāra – Son of Vitantu. He and his brothers Sālvēya, Ṣūrasēna, Ṣrutasēna, and Atisāra all married the same woman, Ajita. *Mahā Bhārata*

Bōdha – A Brahmin who lived in the village of Viṣāla. When his wife gave birth to a boy, a cat stole the baby and replaced him with the baby boy born to Vikrānta, a king. Bōdha assumed the baby by his wife's side was his legitimate son and named him Chaitra and raised him. *Mārkanḍēya Purāṇa*

Bōdhya – Disciple of Pyla's student, Bāshkala. He was taught a Samhita* of the Ṛg Vēda. *Bhāgavata*

Brahma – (*As one of the Hindu Trinity and a major figure, stories of Brahma differ among different Purāṇas composed at different periods with varying emphasis; some are even mutually contradictory. They are grouped here by source document and not chronologically*) The aspect of the Supreme Being that performs creation is called Brahma*. Brahma, like Indra*, is a position, not an individual. Therefore, different individuals occupied the

position at different times. There were nine Brahmas: Bhṛgu, Pulastya, Pulaha, Angirasa, Atri, Kratu, Daksha, Vasishṭha, and Marīchi.

In the beginning, when the whole world was submerged in water, Lord Vishṇu was sleeping on a leaf floating on the water. Brahma came to visit with Him, chatted with Him about how all the worlds were contained within Him, entered Vishṇu's body and saw them all. While Brahma was inside, all nine orifices of Vishṇu's body closed. Brahma then emerged through the stalk onto the lotus growing from Vishṇu's navel. Brahma is considered Vishṇu's son due to His re-emergence from Vishṇu's body.

Rudra was born from Brahma's eyebrows. Rudra in turn created Ekādaṣa (*eleven*) Rudras. They refused their assigned task of further creation. Brahma then created Nava (*nine*) Brahmas. *Kūrma Purāṇa*

Brahma was born from the right side of Ṣiva's body. There was a lotus that had grown from Vishṇu's navel at the time. Brahma entered the lotus, trying to find its origin. Unable to trace the origin, He came out and asked Himself "How did I come to be here? Who is my father?" He then performed Tapas and had a vision of Vishṇu.

Once Brahma and Vishṇu were each claiming to be the greatest. Suddenly, a brilliant column resembling a phallus appeared before them. Seeing no end to it either above or below, Brahma and Vishṇu decided to check where its ends were. Brahma assumed the form of a swan and flew up. Vishṇu took the form of a boar and descended towards the bottom. However far they went, they could not see the end of the column. On the way, Brahma saw a

Mangrove (*Mogali, in Telugu*) flower. Brahma asked the flower where it was coming from. It said "I have been crawling up this object for a very long time, hoping to see its beginning. I have not been able to reach it." Brahma said "I have been coming up for a very long time also to see its beginning, but have been unable to reach it. Tell Vishṇu that I have seen the end and came back." The flower agreed to Brahma's request. The Mogali flower testified that Brahma had seen the end. They both returned to the starting point where Brahma lied to Vishṇu and said He had seen the end. Believing Brahma, Vishṇu greeted Him with a Namaskāra*. Ṣiva then manifested Himself. Brahma and Vishṇu saluted Him with a Namaskāra. Because Brahma and the Mogali flower had lied, Ṣiva gave the flower a Ṣāpa that it was ineligible for use in worship. The flower begged His forgiveness. Ṣiva softened the Ṣāpa in that while not eligible for worship, it will be beautiful and be worn on (*women's*) heads. Ṣiva gave Brahma a Ṣāpa that He will be ineligible to be worshipped. Brahma begged His forgiveness and Ṣiva amended His Ṣāpa providing that Brahma cannot receive worship at ceremonies other than Yāgas.

Brahma originally had five heads. Prideful on account of them, He used His fifth head to heap abuse on Ṣiva. Ṣiva created a ferocious being named Kāla Bhairava and asked him to cut off the head of Brahma which abused Him. Brahma was terrified. He requested Ṣiva to allow the severed head to fall near Ṣiva and that Ṣiva should roam the world begging using the skull as a bowl. *Ṣiva Purāṇa*

Once, a war was going on between the Dēvas and Asuras. Brahma happened to have a fifth head at the time, shaped like a

donkey's head. Brahma, speaking with His donkey head, proclaimed "O! Asuras! Do not be afraid. I will swallow the Dēvas." The Devas reported these unexpected words to Ṣiva and Vishṇu. Ṣiva then cut the fifth head off. The severed head fell to Pātāḷa (*the nether*world). The place where it fell came to be known as Brahmatīrtha. *Brahmānḍa Purāṇa*

Two Asuras*, Madhu and Kaiṭabha (*born from Lord Vishṇu's ears*), were harassing Brahma. Brahma prayed to Vishṇu. Under the influence of Yōga Nidra (*Vishṇu's sleep between the end of the world and a new beginning is special and is called Yōga Nidra, which is also the name of a Goddess who is in control of Vishṇu during that time*), Vishṇu would not wake up. Brahma then prayed to Yōga Nidra and requested Her to leave Vishṇu. When She did and Vishṇu woke up, Brahma described His problem. Vishnu then killed Madhu and Kaiṭabha. *Dēvī Bhāgavata*

Brahma had five heads in the beginning. One of the heads was that of a donkey. Ṣiva, in His fierce form as Bhairava, cut it off.

Sarasvati (*Goddess of knowledge and the arts*) was born from Brahma. Brahma married Her Himself, with a view to enhancing creation.

Asuras, born from the hips of Lord Brahma, wished to copulate with Him. Brahma went to Lord Vishṇu and sought His protection from the Asuras. On Vishṇu's advice, Brahma abandoned His body. A beautiful woman, Sandhya, arose from the abandoned body. The Asuras, mad with lust, swarmed around her. Pleased to be rid of them, Brahma smelled His hand. Gandharvas* and Apsaras* were then born.

With a view to furthering the process of creation, Brahma

created the Sanatkumāras as His mind-born sons. He directed them to create people. They refused. Brahma was angry and was wondering how to continue creation. Lord Vishṇu told Him that Rudra (*one of the many names of Lord Ṣiva*) Himself will be born as His son. *Brahma Purāṇa*

After creating a variety of articulate beings, Brahma was not satisfied with the progress of creation. He then created Manus*.

Pulastya was born from Brahma's ears; Pulaha from His navel, Daksha Prajāpati* and Dharaṇi from His fingers. In addition to these, many Sages were Brahma's mind-born sons.

Brahmins (*priestly class most of whom would learn the Vēdas*) were born from Brahma's head, Kshatriyas (*warrior and princely caste*) from Brahma's arms, Vaiṣyas* from His hips, and Ṣūdras* from His feet.

Once upon a time, an argument arose among the great Sages as to who, among Brahma, Vishṇu, and Ṣiva can grant Mukti*. They sent Sage Bhṛgu to investigate and determine the answer. The Sage went first to Brahma. Bhṛgu sat down before Brahma invited him to sit. Brahma scolded him for breach of protocol. Bhṛgu countered with a Ṣāpa* that Brahma will not be eligible to be worshipped in the world, saying "Your nature is Rajōguṇa (*emotional and passionate*); you are unable to grant Mukti." *Bhāgavata*

All of creation was the work of Brahma. Prajāpatis were born from His body. Sage Nārada was born from His thighs.

Brahma asked Nārada to procreate but Nārada declined, saying "I have no desire to indulge in married life or worldly affairs and I will not procreate." Angered by His son's rejection of His request,

Brahma gave him a Ṣāpa that he will be born to a Ṣūdra woman and be a womanizer. Nārada gave Brahma a counter- Ṣāpa that He will not be worshipped.

Once, Ganga was flowing as water in the cowherds' village. Kṛshṇa felt lust for her (*in the Purāṇas, rivers are anthropomorphed into women*). Rādha, learning of His infatuation, scolded Him. Afraid of Rādha, Ganga sought refuge at Vishṇu's feet. The world was without water. Led by Lord Brahma, the Dēvas went to Vishṇu and requested Him to relieve Ganga of her fear and allow them to take her out. Vishṇu released Ganga from His feet. Brahma put her in His Kamanḍala* and took her to Vaikunṭha (*Vishṇu's abode*).

Once, Lord Brahma spontaneously ejaculated on seeing Rati, the beautiful wife of Manmatha (*the God of Love*). Ashamed of His lack of control, he covered the semen with a cloth. Agni (*the God of Fire*) came and burned the cloth. Brahma doused the fire with water. Varuṇa was born from the water Brahma sprinkled on the fire.

Brahma went to the wedding of Ṣiva and Pārvati. The sight of the bride and groom made Brahma ejaculate. Embarrassed, he covered the semen with his foot. Grains of sand mixed with the semen and Vālakhilyas were born from the mixture. *Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa*

Ṣiva's Linga (*phallic symbol*) as Jyōtirlinga (*its luminous form*) told Brahma "I will give you a boon. Choose what you would like." Brahma, wanting to be superior to Ṣiva, asked Ṣiva to be born as His son. Ṣiva, angered by Brahma's demand, gave Him a Ṣāpa that He will be ineligible for worship. *Kathāsaritsāgara*

When Ṣiva was preparing to kill the three Asuras named Tripura, a chariot and horses were ready. But He needed a chariot-driver. It was necessary to find a chariot-driver who is stronger than the rider. The Dēvas requested Brahma to perform the task. He agreed and drove Ṣiva's chariot.

Once, Brahma planned to perform a Yāga and looked for a Ṛtvija* similar to Himself. He could not find such a being anywhere. Then Brahma Himself became pregnant, carried the fetus for a thousand years and gave birth with a sneeze. Because he exited through a sneeze, the child was named Kshuta (*Sanskrit for 'sneeze'*). As he grew up and started performing as the Ṛtvija, his Danḍa* disappeared. They searched for it everywhere, but could not find it. Brahma told Vishṇu about the disappearance. The two of them went to Ṣiva. Siva used His spiritual power to fashion another Danḍa and gave it to Brahma. *Mahā Bhārata*

Brahmadatta I – Son of King Anagha. He knew the language of all animals and birds. Once, as he and his wife were strolling in a forest, several animal sounds were heard. Brahmadatta, hearing the sounds, laughed out loud. Assuming that he was laughing at her, his wife was upset and stopped talking to him. He prayed to Lord Kṛshṇa for seven nights. In his dream, Kṛshṇa appeared and told him "Meet Brahmins tomorrow morning." The next morning, a Brahmin came to his Sabha (*court*) and recited a Ṣlōka (*Sanskrit poem*), with the cryptic words "I wonder what happened to the seven who were first born as Brahmins, then as hunters, and after that, as geese." Brahmadatta remembered his past births when he heard the poem, rewarded the Brahmin with the wealth he requested.

In an earlier life, he, and six others were the sons of a Brahmin named Kauṣika. They were disciples of Garga. Once, they took their Guru's cow out to graze. They felt very hungry, killed and ate the cow under the pretence that they were offering it to their ancestors. They lied to the Guru, saying a tiger ate the cow. Because of their intent to offer the meat to their ancestors, they had the ability to remember their other lives. In a later life they were born as geese. One of the seven wished to be a king. He was born as Brahmadatta. Two wanted to be ministers. They were born as Brahmadatta's ministers. The other four wanted to be born as Brahmins in the king's city and to perform Tapas*. When their father asked them, as they were leaving home to go to the forest, how he is going to survive, they told him to go to the king and recite the poem above. When the Brahmin (*father of the four born as Brahmins*) read the poem to king Brahmadatta, they all recognised each other. *Matsya Purāṇa*

Brahmadatta II – A king (see **Pūjani**). *Mahā Bhārata*

Brahmadatta III – Son of King Nīpa and Sundari, daughter of Sage Ṣuka. By the power of Yōga he learnt from Jaigīshavya, he and his wife Gōdēvi had a son Vishvaksēna. *Bhāgavata*

Brahmadatta IV – A king. Once, Sage Gautama came to his home and asked for food. The Muni stayed as his guest for one hundred and twenty years. One day, the Muni found a piece of meat in his meal. Gautama, angry at finding meat in his food, gave Brahmadatta a Ṣāpa* that he would become an eagle. The king pleaded "I did not know that there was meat in your food. Is it right to punish me for a fault of which I was not aware?" Gautama

told him that Lord Rāma will touch him and that will release him from the Ṣāpa. He became an (*articulate*) eagle. One day he, while in the form of an eagle, had a dispute with an (*articulate*) owl. The two of them went to Rāma and asked Him to resolve their dispute. Rāma then touched him. He was immediately released from the Ṣāpa. *Uttara Rāmāyaṇa*

Brahmadatta V – King of the country of Sālva. He had two wives. Childless for a long time, he prayed to Lord Ṣiva. By the blessing of Agni (*the God of Fire*), he had two sons, Hamsa and Ḍibhaka. His sons encouraged him to perform a Rājasūya Yāga*. All that resulted from his attempt to perform the Yāga were a battle with Kṛshṇa and His allies resulting in the death of his sons. *Mahā Bhārata*

Brahmadatta VI – Son of Sage Chūli and his wife Sōmada. He became king of the country of Kāmpilya. King Kuṣanābha gave him his one hundred malformed daughters in marriage. As soon as he touched their hands, they lost their ugliness and became beautiful women. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Brahmadhana – A female Vānara*. Daughter of Ṣanḍa. *Brahmānḍa Purāṇa*

Brahmakalpa – A period in the course of time (*consists of four Yugas; Kṛta, Trēta, Dwāpara, and Kali*). Other Kalpas are Padmakalpa and Varāhakalpa. *Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa*

Brahmaṣira – A powerful Astra (*Astras are more than arrows; they have magical abilities of locking on to their target, they are deployed by the silent chanting of secret Mantras, taught only to those deemed eligible by a Guru*). The use of this Astra was taught

for the first time to Agnivēṣa (*archery Guru of Drōṇa, Guru of the Kauravas and Pānḍavas*) by Sage Agasti.

Asvatthaama (*Drōṇa's son*) used this weapon to try to kill the fetus in Uttara's womb (*foiled by Kṛshṇa to preserve the Pānḍava lineage*). *Mahā Bhārata*

Brahmatīrtha – The place where Lord Brahma's fifth head fell when it was cut off by Lord Ṣiva. *Brahmānḍa Purāṇa*

Brahmavidya – Wife of Prajāpati, son of Manu* named Dēva. *Mahā Bhārata*

Bṛhadaṣva I – A Muni. He narrated the story of King Nala to Dharmarāja during the Pānḍavas' exile in the forest. *Mahā Bhārata*

Bṛhadaṣva II – Son of King Ṣrāvasti. When he was ready to hand over his kingdom to his son Kuvalayāṣva and leave for the Tapōvana*, a Brahmin named Uttanka came to him and said "An Asura* has been harassing me. Please kill him." (*In Purāṇic times, kings could not deny any request by a Brahmin or Muni*) Because he was not allowed to touch weapons after determining to perform Tapas*, he directed his son to kill the Asura and left for the forest. *Mahā Bhārata*

Bṛhadaṣva III – Son of King Sahadēva (*not the Pānḍava of the same name*) of the Sūrya (*solar; one of the two major royal lineages, the other being Chandra, or lunar*) dynasty. His son was Bhānumanta. *Bhāgavata*

Bṛhadbala I – King of the country of Kōsala. He fought on the Kaurava side in the Mahā Bhārata war. When Abhimanyu broke

through the enemy formation Padma Vyūha*, this king attacked him and was killed. *Mahā Bhārata*

Bṛhadbala II – Son of Viṣvasāhya. His son was Bṛhadratha. He was killed by Abhimanyu in the Mahā Bhārata war. *Bhāgavata*

Bṛhadratha I – Son of Uparicharavasu. *Mahā Bhārata*

Bṛhadratha II – King of the country of Magadha. Father of Jarāsandha. He married the twin daughters of the king of Kāṣi*. Childless for a very long time, Bṛhadratha was performing many Vratas*. He approached a Muni named Chaṇḍakauṣika who was performing Tapas* sitting under a mango tree in the forest. He greeted the Muni with a Namaskāra* and requested that he be blessed to become a father. The Muni consecrated a fruit that fell from the tree by Mantras and gave it to Bṛhadratha. Bṛhadratha split the fruit into two and gave a piece to each of his wives. They both ate the piece of mango fruit given to them and became pregnant. They each had a baby but both babies were incomplete – each had one eye, one leg, one arm, half a stomach, and half a head as if a baby had been cut into two. Scared at the sight of the strange-looking babies and unwilling to show them to their husband, they had the babies thrown away on the street outside their palace. Jara, a Rākshasi (*female Asura**) who was loitering near the palace, pleased to find food, picked them up and held them. When the two half-babies were brought together in Jara's arms, they combined to become a healthy baby boy and started to cry. The weight of this strong baby boy was too much for Jara to carry. Hearing the baby's cries, some old women came out of the palace and informed the king of their finding. Deciding that the

baby is no longer available for her to eat, Jara assumed a human female form and accompanied the women and the baby to the king's presence. She explained to the king that she was a Rākshasi, that she picked up the malformed fetuses to eat, and that a normal baby boy was formed out of the two half-babies when she brought them together. The boy was named Jarāsandha because he was formed when Jara caused the Sandhi (*joining*) of two pieces of flesh. Bṛhadratha gave her much food, celebrated her action (*of giving him a son instead of two pieces of flesh*) annually, out of gratitude. His father eventually crowned Jarāsandha as his successor and left for the forest for Tapas. *Mahā Bhārata*

Bṛhadratha III – A king. His son was Puranjaya. *Bhāgavata*

Bṛhadratha IV – Son of King Ṣatadhanva. His commander-in-chief, Ṣunga, killed him and took over the kingdom. *Bhāgavata*

Bṛhadratha V – Son of Nimi's son Dūrva. His son was Sudāsa. *Bhāgavata*

Bṛhadṛta – King of the country of Simhaḷa (*currently Ṣrī Lanka*). Father of Padmāvati. He will give his daughter in marriage to Kalki (*the future*), tenth incarnation of Lord Vishṇu. *Kalki (Bhavishya) Purāṇa*

Bṛhadyumna – A king. He appointed Arvāvasu as the Ṛtvija* at a Sattra Yāga he performed. *Mahā Bhārata*

Bṛhannaḷa – Pseudonym adopted by Arjuna during the incognito year (*when he was a eunuch due to the Ṣāpa* by Ūrvaṣi*). *Mahā Bhārata*

Bṛhanta – King of the country of Ulūka. He opposed Arjuna who

was on a campaign of world conquest and was defeated by him. *Mahā Bhārata*

Bṛhaspati – Guru of the Dēvas. Son of Angirasa. Utathya and Samvartana were his brothers. His wife was Tāra. He had a son named Samyama.

Once, Indra* and Bṛhaspati disguised themselves as Munis and set out to visit Lord Ṣiva in Kailāsa (*His mountain abode*). Lord Ṣiva, with a view to testing them, took a terrifying form and stood naked in their way. Indra ordered him to step aside to let them pass. The naked man just stood there, without answering Indra. Indra repeated his order with the same result. Indra then raised the Vajrāyudha (*a thunderbolt, Indra's signature weapon, literally 'weapon of diamond'*) to strike at the man. Lord Ṣiva immobilized Indra's arm and (*opening his third eye*) burned him down to the ground. Bṛhaspati, realizing that the naked man was Lord Ṣiva, prayed to Him and implored him to forgive Indra and save him. Lord Ṣiva, in His kindness, revived Indra. *Ṣiva Purāṇa*

Tāra fell in love with her husband's disciple Chandra (*the Moon God*), attracted by his good looks, and when her elderly husband was not home, made love to Chandra and became pregnant. Chandra took her to his home. A war ensued between Chandra and Bṛhaspati. The Asuras* were about to join the battle on Chandra's side. Lord Brahma and the Dēvas intervened to prevent the catastrophe (*of a divisive struggle among the Dēvas, being exploited by the Asuras for their own benefit*). In the meantime, Tāra gave birth to a son named Budha*. Chandra and Bṛhaspati each claimed Budha as his son. Brahma, unable to determine the boy's paternity, asked Tāra. She announced that Budha was

Chandra's son. Brahma decided that Budha belonged to Chandra and Tāra to Bṛhaspati. *Bhāgavata*

Bṛhaspati felt lust for Mamata, the wife of his brother Utathya, who was pregnant at the time. Ignoring her protest, he forced himself on her and raped her. Even the fetus in her womb criticized his action. Bṛhaspati gave the fetus a Ṣāpa* that he would be born blind. The fetus kicked out Bṛhaspati's semen. Bṛhaspati and Mamata quarreled about who should take the semen. They both abandoned it. The semen developed into a child. That child became Sage Bharadvāja. *Mahā Bhārata*

Once, Ṣukra (*Guru of the Asuras*) was having an affair with Jayanti (*daughter of Indra*), away from his Āṣram. Bṛhaspati, with a view to deceiving the Asuras, assumed the form of Ṣukra and lived among them. The Asuras assumed he was their Guru and shared strategic secrets with Bṛhaspati. Ṣukra then returned. Seeing two men who looked exactly like their Guru, the Asuras were unable to identify the real Ṣukra from the impostor. Each "Ṣukra" kept claiming he is the real Ṣukra and the other was the impostor. A battle ensued between them. Eventually, Bṛhaspati disappeared. *Matsya Purāṇa*

Bṛhati – Wife of Chakshusha. She had a Kshētraja* son, Chākshusha, by Ripu, the son of Bhadra. Chākshusha became a Manu*. *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*

Bṛhatsēna – King of the country of Madra. He had a daughter, Lakshaṇa. She was desirous of marrying Kṛshṇa. Her father, aware of her wish, had a device built and fixed to the ceiling with a fish which could not be seen directly but its reflection is visible in the pool of water on the floor (*similar to the Matsya Yantra*

*constructed for Draupadi's Swayamvara**). He arranged a Swayamvara for her with the proviso that the one who hits the fish using a big bow provided for the purpose would win his daughter's hand in marriage. Many princes attempted the task and failed. Kṛshṇa succeeded. Bṛhatsēna performed Lakshaṇa's marriage to Kṛshṇa. *Bhāgavata*

Budbuda – An Apsara*. Among her female companions are Vandana and Samīchi. Once, they were visiting the earth and seeing a Brahmin performing Tapas*, they disturbed him and made fun of him. He gave them a Ṣāpa* that they would turn into alligators. When they prayed to him for a means of release from the Ṣāpa, he allowed that if someone pulls them out of the water and throws them onto land, they will be released from it. The bodies of water where Budbuda and her companions were living as alligators came to be known as Nārī Tīrthas* (*Nāri is Sanskrit for 'woman'*). Arjuna (*ever fearless*) once waded into one of these. An alligator grabbed him. Arjuna pulled it out of the water and threw it on shore. Released from the Ṣāpa, the alligator assumed the original form of an Apsara, greeted Arjuna with a Namaskāra* and went on her way. *Mahā Bhārata*

Buddha – An incarnation of Lord Vishṇu. Once upon a time, people on earth were faithfully practicing all the Vēdic rituals and following Dharma (*the righteous path*). All humans were ascending to Swarga (*heaven*) at the end of their earthly life. No one was going to Naraka (*hell*). Yama (*the God of Death, whose primary function is to judge sinners and administer the proper punishment*) had nothing to do. Distinctions between the Dēvas and humans who ascended to Swarga were being blurred. Yama

and other Dēvas went and complained to Vishṇu. Vishṇu told them that He would take an incarnation on earth and make people ineligible to reach Swarga by making them lose respect for the Vēdas and abandon their responsibility for right actions.

Vishṇu took birth as the son of King Ṣuddhōdana of the Ṣākya dynasty by Mahāmāya. He was Buddha. He spread the religion known as Buddhism in the world. *Bhāgavata*

Buddhi – Daughter of Dharaṇi and her husband Daksha Prajāpati*. The Manu* named Dharma married her. *Mahā Bhārata*

Budha* – Son of Tāra (*wife of Bṛhaspati, Guru of the Dēvas*), and Chandra (*the Moon God*). Bṛhaspati and Chandra each claimed him as his son. Lord Brahma decreed that he was Chandra's son and gave him to Chandra. Rōhiṇi, one of the wives of Chandra, raised him.

Sudyumna, son of a Manu* once bathed in a lake and turned into a woman (*named Ila*). She was examining herself, wonderstruck at the transformation and realizing how beautiful she was. Budha saw her in a confused state, and falling in love with her, asked her "Why did you come out of the house alone? Come, let us go home." She followed him, assuming he must be her husband. She and Budha had a son named Purūrava. Later, Budha performed Tapas* and became a heavenly body (*the planet Mercury*). *Bhāgavata*

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Chaikitāyana – Son of Chikitāyana. Once, he and a scholar named Ṣilaka were discussing the field of knowledge called Udgītha (*pure form of Sāma Vēda, the source of music*). He was answering Ṣilaka's questions, but at one point Ṣilaka said to him,"Your knowledge is incomplete. It is also contrary to the science of Sāma Gāna and the law. If someone whose knowledge of Udgītha is comprehensive gives you a Ṣāpa* that your head should be separated from your body, that will happen." Recognizing his shortcoming, Chaikitāyana became a disciple of Ṣilaka and learnt Udgītha from him properly. *Chāndōgya Upanishad*

Chaitra I – Son born to Chitra by Budha*. His son was Adhiratha. *Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa*

Chaitra II – Son of King Vikrānta and his wife Haimini. Immediately after his birth, a cat named Jātahāriṇi put Chākshushu, the newborn baby of Giribhadra in Haimini's bed and Chaitra in the bed of the wife of a Brahmin named Bōdha in a city named Viṣāla. Some years later, informed by Chākshushu that Chaitra was really his son, Vikrānta had him brought home. *Mārkanḍēya Purāṇa*

Chaitraratha – The name of a mountain. *Mahā Bhārata*

Chakra* – Lord Vishṇu's weapon. When deployed, it locks on to the intended victim, chases and kills him, however strong or powerful he may be, and returns to Vishṇu. It was made from the bones of Sage Dadhīchi. *Brahma Purāṇa*

Chākshasha – In the epoch of this Manu*, Lord Vishṇu was born as the son of Vairāja and Sankhyāti and was known by the name Akita. The churning of the ocean of milk occurred during this Manu's reign. *Bhāgavata*

Chakshavu – Son of Sarvatēja and his wife Ākūti. He and his wife Naḍvala had sons named Trita, Dyumna, etc. *Bhāgavata*

Chākshusha I – This Manu* was born to Viṣvakarma* and his wife Akṛti. *Bhāgavata*

Chākshusha II – Son of Khamitra and father of Vivimṣati. *Mahā Bhārata*

Chākshushi – A Science. This knowledge enables one to see all three worlds (*Swarga, or heaven; Bhūmi, or earth; and Pātāḷa, or the netherworld*) and gives Gandharvas* their special abilities. It was learnt from Manu by Sōma, who taught it to the Gandharva King Viṣvāvasu, who taught it to Angāraparṇa. Angāraparṇa taught it to Arjuna. It takes intense training for six months to learn it and is unavailable to evil men. *Mahā Bhārata*

Chakshushu I – Son of Succhāya and her husband Ṣishṭi. His wife was Pushkariṇi. Their son Chākshushu became a Manu*. *Vishṇu Purāṇa*

Chakshushu II – His wife was Bṛhati. She had a Kshētraja* son

named Chākshushu by Ripu. *Brahma Purāṇa*

Chākshushu – A Manu*. (*Son of Chakshushu's wife by Ripu*) He was known as Chākshushu because, in a previous incarnation, he was born from Lord Brahma's Chakshusu (*eye*). In his next life he was born as the son of a human couple named Mitra and Giribhadra. Six days after he was born, he laughed out loud when his mother was giving him a kiss. When the mother expressed surprise that her baby, who had not yet opened his eyes, laughed out loud, he said, "A cat named Jātahāriṇi is waiting to swallow me. I have not done anything to cause you happiness. I laughed because I do not understand why you are so pleased." Giribhadra angrily said, "If you do not like me giving you a kiss, I will stop", and stomped out of the birthing room. A cat, Jātahāriṇi, carried the baby away. It placed him in the bed of the wife of a king named Vikrānta, who had just given birth, and took her baby to another place. Vikrānta, thinking Chākshushu was his own son, named him Ānanda, raised him and performed the Upanayanam*. Chākshushu's Guru took him to Vikrānta's wife and asked him to greet his mother with a Namaskāra*. He said, "This lady is not my mother. Her son, named Chaitra, is being brought up by a Brahmin named Bōdha in a city called Viṣālapura. Go and get him." He also explained to them the circumstances of his own birth, and went away to the forest to perform Tapas*. When Lord Brahma appeared to him and asked what boon he would like, he asked for Mukti*. Brahma told him that he had to become a Manu and persuaded him to stop his Tapas. He became a Manu and was named Chākshushu. His wife was Naḍvala. Their sons were Ṣatadyumna, Ūru, Pūru, Tapasvi, Ṣuchi, Agnishṭōma, Atirātra,

Pradyumna, and Abhimanyu. In his Manvantara (*reign as Manu*), one named Manōjava was Indra*. Sumēdha (*also known as Mantradyumna*), Viraja, Havishmanta, Unnata, Madhu, Sahishṇu, and Vimala were the Saptarshis*. *Bhāgavata*

Chala – Son of Bala and father of Vajranābha. *Bhāgavata*

Champakamāla – Daughter of the king of Kuntala. Wife of Chandrahāsa. *Jaimini Bhārata*

Champānagar – The city built by Champa, son of Pṛthulāksha, and named for him. *Bhāgavata*

Chāmunḍi – Lord Ṣiva's aspect of Trikaḷa. She separated the Charma (*skin*) and Munḍa (*head*) of an Asura named Ruru. She thereby came to be known as Chāmunḍi. *Varāha Purāṇa*

Chanḍa – Son of Ṣukra (*the Guru of Asuras**). He was the Asuras' priest for Yāgas. He tried to inculcate hatred of Vishṇu in the mind of Prahlāda per the request of Hiraṇyakaṣipu (*father of Prahlāda*), but failed. *Mahā Bhārata; Bhāgavata*

Chanḍa and Munḍa – Asura* brothers. They were followers of Ṣumbha and Niṣumbha (*powerful Asuras who had a boon from Ṣiva that no male can kill them*). Chanḍa and Munḍa once saw Kauṣiki (*one of the names of Dēvi, the Supreme Being*) and told Ṣumbha that no woman was more beautiful than her and that the life of any man who did not have sex with her was a waste. Kauṣiki announced that she will marry only the one who defeats her in battle and that she would kill Ṣumbha and Niṣumbha if they did not retreat to Pātāḷa (*the nether world*). Ṣumbha and Niṣumbha sent their armies to capture Kauṣiki but She killed them. They then

sent Chaṇḍa and Muṇḍa and She killed them too (*she got the name Chaṇḍika by killing Chaṇḍa*). Kāḷi was born from the face of Chaṇḍika while She was killing these two (See **Kauṣiki**). *Mārkaṇḍēya Purāṇa*

Chaṇḍadēva – Son of a Brahmin named Matanga. He obtained the power of shapeshifting at will as a result of a boon from Indra*. He became famous and was worshipped by virtuous women. *Mahā Bhārata*

Chaṇḍakauṣika – A Muni. Once, while he was performing Tapas*, a king named Bṛhadratha, who wanted a son, came to him. Chaṇḍakauṣika gave him a Chūtaphala (*mango*) and asked him to give it to his wives. Bṛhadratha's two wives each gave birth to half a baby (*by eating half the fruit*) that was joined together to become Jarāsandha. Chaṇḍakauṣika visited the capital after Jarāsandha's birth, saw Jarāsandha and told Bṛhadratha that his son will be a powerful ruler. *Mahā Bhārata*

Chaṇḍavēga – A Gandharva* king. He invaded the capital city of Puranjana's kingdom. A prominent citizen named Prajāgara defeated him. *Bhāgavata*

Chaṇḍika I – Dēvi, born from the body of Pārvati. Kauṣiki killed Asuras* named Chaṇḍa and Muṇḍa. Kauṣiki got the name Chaṇḍika by killing Chaṇḍa. When she saw the Asura brothers, she became very angry and her face turned black. Kāḷi (*meaning 'the black one'*) emerged from her dark face and joined the battle. When Kāḷi was fighting Raktabīja (*the commander of the army of Chaṇḍa and Muṇḍa, whose blood had the unique characteristic that an Asura emerged from each drop of it that fell to the*

ground), Chaṇḍika drank his blood to prevent it from falling to the ground. *Mārkaṇḍēya Purāṇa*

Chaṇḍika II – Wife of a Brahmin named Uddālaka. She was wild and unruly, doing the exact opposite of every thing she should do. Uddālaka was very unhappy that he lost his Brahmacharya (*the first of the four phases of a man's life; the man observes celibacy in this phase*) status without gaining the benefits of Gṛhasta (*the second phase, literally householder, in which the man marries and raises his family*) status. Uddālaka went to the great Sage Kaunḍinya and related his plight. The Sage advised him to use reverse psychology, i.e., since she does the opposite of what he asks her to do, ask her to do the opposite of what he actually wants her to do. Uddālaka followed the Sage's advice and thought he would be able to lead a peaceful life. For example, observing that the next day was the anniversary of the death of one of his ancestors (*a Brahmin provides for his dead ancestors or Pitṛ Dēvas by a religious observance that includes fasting, chanting of Mantras, and providing a feast to good Brahmins, cooked by a chaste lady who bathes before cooking*), he told his wife to cook a meal without taking a bath and wearing unclean clothes. The next morning, she did the opposite, i.e., took a bath before cooking the meal wearing fresh, clean clothes. He then told her to not serve the Brahmins who had arrived. She served them, taking care that they got every dish in its proper sequence. Uddālaka was deliriously happy that every thing went so smoothly that he eventually forgot to use reverse psychology. He told her to carefully guard the meal he should eat to break his fast. She then promptly threw his meal on the garbage heap. He could not contain his anger at this

misbehaviour and gave her a Ṣāpa* that she would become a rock at the foot of the Vindhya mountain. She cried and begged him for release from the Ṣāpa. He told her she would be released from the Ṣāpa when Dharmarāja's (*the eldest of the five Pānḍavas*) sacrificial horse steps on the rock. *Jaimini Bhārata*

Chandra I – Once, as Sage Atri was making love to his wife, his semen fell to the ground. Vāyu (*the Wind God*) divided it into three parts. One of the parts entered Vāyu's eye. Chandra (*the Moon God*) was born from that part. He was born with attributes of Lord Brahma.

Chandra went to the Yagjna by Daksha Prajāpati* along with the other Dēvas. As Lord Ṣiva and the ferocious creatures he invoked in his fury were trampling and destroying every thing, Chandra fell under Ṣiva's feet. Chandra, in his agony, prayed to Ṣiva. Ṣiva took pity on Chandra and wore him on His forehead. *Mārkanḍēya Purāṇa*

Once upon a time, Brahma directed Sage Atri to propagate the species. As Atri was performing Tapas*, a bright light emerged from his eye. At first, the ten directions bore the light. But unable to bear the brightness they dropped it into the ocean. Lord Brahma gathered it and gave it a male form. The Dēvas then prayed using a mantra called Sōma. Chandra was thus formed. *Matsya Purāṇa*

Chandra was created to be Āhārya (*ornamentation*) to the Dēvas. Chandra is Lord Vishṇu's left eye. Chandra was born from the ocean of milk when it was churned. As he sat with the other Dēvas to drink Amṛtam*, he noticed that the Asura* Rāhu took divine form and drank Amṛtam and informed Lord Vishṇu. Vishṇu deployed his Chakra* on Rāhu, but he did not die even though his

neck was severed because he had already drunk Amṛtam. From then on, Rāhu harboured an enmity for Chandra and periodically swallows him (*mythological explanation for eclipses*).

When the Prachētasas were preparing to burn the trees, Chandra came and presented them a girl, Mārisha, born of trees, and begged them not to burn the trees. *Mahā Bhārata*

Chandra was a disciple of Bṛhaspati (*the Dēvas' Guru*) and often stayed in his house. Bṛhaspati's wife Tāra fell in love with Chandra and when her husband was away from home slept with Chandra. Tāra became pregnant. Chandra took her to his place, and when Bṛhaspati asked him to send her back, he refused. Because of their hatred for the Dēvas and their Guru, the Asuras supported Chandra and attacked Bṛhaspati. Bṛhaspati sought the help of Brahma in the matter. Meanwhile, Tāra gave birth to a son. Chandra and his Guru each claimed the child as his son. Unable to decide who was right, Brahma asked Tāra who fathered her son. She said he was Chandra's son. Brahma then gave the son to Chandra and Tāra to Bṛhaspati. The son of Chandra and Tāra was Budha*. *Bhāgavata*

Chandra married the twenty seven daughters of Daksha, the Tāras (*Aṣwini, Bharaṇi, etc.*). He preferred Rōhiṇi among all his wives and neglected all the others. They went and complained to their father. Incensed on hearing this, Daksha went to Chandra and said, "Since you insulted and caused grief to my daughters, I am giving you a Ṣāpa* that you shall be afflicted with a consumptive disease." Scared by Daksha's Ṣāpa, Chandra sought Lord Ṣiva's Ṣaraṇu*. Siva placed Chandra on His forehead (*where he was secure from anyone*). Because of Ṣiva's action to protect him,

Chandra became even more distant from his wives. Daksha went to Ṣiva and asked him to release Chandra. Ṣiva refused, saying he cannot violate the Ṣaraṇu He had given. Daksha was about to give a Ṣāpa to Lord Ṣiva Himself. To prevent such a great disaster, Lord Vishṇu appeared and made peace between them by splitting Chandra into two parts. In accordance with Lord Brahma's division of Chandra, Vishṇu decreed that one part will not be subject to consumptive disease and gave that part to Ṣiva and gave the other part, that would grow and shrink alternately, to the Tāras.

Chandra was angry that his father-in-law gave him a Ṣāpa for such a trivial fault as showing favouritism to one of his wives and disappeared after giving Daksha a counter-Ṣāpa that he shall be destroyed. Due to the absence of Chandra, nature's rhythm was disrupted in that crops failed and it stopped raining. Medicinal herbs did not grow, and Yāgas were not being performed. The Dēvas went to Brahma and begged Him to make Chandra return. Brahma told them "Chandra was hiding within medicinal herbs. If you put the herbs in the ocean and churned the ocean, Chandra would emerge again." The Dēvas and Asuras joined together and churned the ocean of milk. Chandra re-emerged. *Varāha Purāṇa*

Once, Lord Vighnēṣwara, after eating a full meal, was going to pay His respects to Lord Ṣiva at night-fall. Observing His difficulty walking on account of the heavy meal He just ate, Chandra laughed. As Chandra was laughing, Vighnēṣwara's stomach burst open and many of the food items He ate fell out. Vighnēṣwara's stomach was stitched back using a snake as the thread. Pārvati, angry that Chandra was the cause of the embarrassing incident, gave a Ṣāpa that Chandra should not be seen and anyone who sees

him will suffer false accusations. She informed Brahma of her Ṣāpa. Brahma informed the Dēvas. The Dēvas pleaded with Her to retract Her Ṣāpa because it is impossible not to see Chandra. She amended the Ṣāpa to apply only to those who see Chandra without hearing this story on the birthday of Vighnēṣwara, which is the fourth day after the new moon in the month of Bhādrapada. *Vighnēṣwara Charitam*

Chandra II – Son of Viṣvagandha of the Ikshvāku dynasty. His son was Yavanāṣva. *Bhāgavata*

Chandrabhāga – A river. Lord Brahma divided Chandra (*Moon God*) into two parts on the mountain where this river originates. *Varāha Purāṇa*

Chandragupta – Minister of a king named Haihaya (*also known as Kārtavīrya Arjuna*). He accompanied the king on a hunting trip during which they visited the Āṣram of Sage Jamadagni. While there, he observed the Muni's Hōma Dhēnu (*the cow whose milk is used for oblations, or holy rituals*) create a fantastic city. He persuaded the king that such a cow should belong to the ruler. Against the strenuous objections of the royal priest, but not wanting to deprive a Brahmin of his wealth, he mounted an expedition to the Ṛshi's Āṣram with money and a large armed force. He asked Jamadagni, "Take this money and give your Hōma Dhēnu to the king." When Jamadagni refused the offer because the cow was the Hōma Dhēnu, he responded that Jamadgni's refusal will anger the king and that they will use force to capture the cow. Jamadagni told him that appropriating a Brahmin's property by means other than a willing donation will reduce the taker's life

expectancy. Furious at Jamadagni's refusal, Chandragupta attacked the Muni with his army and severely beat and killed him. When he tried to capture the cow, she unleashed her powers and destroyed the army. Chandragupta somehow managed to capture her calf, took it to the king and related to him what happened at the Āṣram. *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*

Chandrahanta – Son of a servant woman named Krūra. *Mahā Bhārata*

Chandrahāsa – Son of the king of Kerala country. His father was killed by enemies while Chandrahāsa was still a child. His mother immolated herself and died on her husband's funeral pyre. Chandrahāsa, orphaned at a tender age, went to a kingdom named Kuntala. As he was walking by the royal palace, some Brahmins saw him and asked each other who was this boy that looked like a prince. The chief minister of Kuntala, whose name was Dushṭa Buddhi (*literally, one whose thoughts are evil*) overheard them. True to his name, he had intended his son to become the next ruler of the kingdom; afraid that this interloper would become the next king, he ordered his servants to kill the boy. Unwilling to kill a helpless child, the servants took the boy to a forest and noticing that he had six toes, they cut off his little toe and showed it to the Minister as proof that they had obeyed his order.

Kuḷindaka, ruler of a kingdom named Ṣambara, was hunting in that forest. He saw the crying child and being childless, took him to his palace, named him Chandrahāsa, and raised him. Chandrahāsa received a good education, and was helping the king in governing the country as well as conquering other kingdoms and bringing their tribute to his father's treasury. Dushṭa Buddhi,

on a visit to Kuḷindaka's Sabha (*court*), saw Chandrahāsa and remembering having seen him in the past, asked Kuḷindaka who the boy was. Kuḷindaka replied that he saw the boy crying in the forest and adopted him as his son. Realizing that his earlier attempt to kill the boy had failed, Dushṭa Buddhi formulated a new plot to kill Chandrahāsa. He wrote a letter to his son Madana instructing him to give Visha (*poison*) to the bearer of the letter and asked Chandrahāsa to take it and deliver it to his son. Chandrahāsa took the letter and went to Kuntala and being tired from the journey, he rested in a garden there. The princess of the realm, Champakamāla and Vishaya, daughter of Dushṭa Buddhi, happened to be walking in the garden at the time. They were both aroused on the sight of the sleeping Chandrahāsa. Vishaya, noticing the letter he was carrying, took it from the sleeping Chandrahāsa and read it. When she saw that her father asked her brother to give Visha to Chandrahāsa, she wondered why such a handsome boy was to be killed, and having fallen in love with Chandrahaasa, altered Visha to Vishaya and replaced the letter and went home. Chandrahāsa woke up soon thereafter and took the letter and delivered it to Madana. Seeing his father's direction to give Vishaya to the bearer of the letter, he gave his sister in marriage to Chandrahāsa. Returning home the next day, Dushṭa Buddhi was upset that Chandrahāsa had become his son-in-law. Undeterred, he continued to plan to kill Chandrahāsa. He said to Chandrahāsa, "According to our tradition, a newly married man must go to the temple of Chanḍika, alone." Chandrahāsa said he would do so. In the meantime, Dushṭa Buddhi summoned some assassins and directed them to kill any man who goes alone to the temple of Chanḍika the

next day. The next day, Chandrahāsa was about to go to the temple. Just then, the king sent Chandrahāsa a message to come visit him. Madana, who happened to be there, told Chandrahāsa to go to the king, and that he would go to the temple instead. Madana went to the temple and the assassins, seeing a lone man, killed him. The king, when Chandrahāsa came in response to his message, gave his daughter in marriage to Chandrahāsa. On learning that his son had been killed (*by his own plot that went awry*) and that the king had given his daughter in marriage to Chandrahāsa, Dushṭa Buddhi died of a broken heart. Chandrahāsa, learning of the deaths of Madana and Dushṭa Buddhi, went to the temple, prayed to Chanḍika and offered to sacrifice himself. Chanḍika then appeared and revived both Madana and Dushṭa Buddhi. Chandrahāsa was crowned king of Kuntala as well as Ṣambara. He had sons named Makaradhwaja and Padmāksha. *Jaimini Bhārata*

Chandrakānta – Wife of a Brahmin named Vēdarāṣi. She was a Pativrata*. Vēdarāṣi wholly immersed himself in studying the Vēdas and stopped sleeping with his wife. In this situation, a prostitute named Vidyāvati approached her and said, "Why do you waste your youth? Enjoy the pleasures of family life." She introduced Chandrakānta to a life of prostitution. On learning of the activity of his wife and her friend, Vēdarāṣi expelled the two women from his house. Living as a prostitute, she soon died. She was reborn after some time as a servant woman. Wandering about, she eventually reached the Kāvēri river and by bathing in the sacred river, she attained Mukti*, just as she heard the Brahmins extol the cleansing power of the river. (*Tula Kāvēri Māhātmyam is a 'Sthala Purāṇa'**). *Tula Kāvēri Māhātmyam; Agni Purāṇa*

Chandrakētu I – Son of Lakshmaṇa and brother of Angada. The two brothers became rulers of the western kingdoms of the empire. His kingdom was called Chandrakānta. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Chandrakētu II – A follower of Saubala (*son of Uparicharavasu*). He fought as an ally of Duryōdhana and died in the Mahā Bhārata war. *Mahā Bhārata*

Chandramati – Wife of Emperor Hariṣchandra. When Hariṣchandra, bound by his oath to always speak the truth and abide by his promises, gave up his empire and all his possessions to Sage Viṣvāmitra and went away to the forest, she and their son Lohitāsya accompanied him. Nakshatraka, disciple of Viṣvāmitra who accompanied them to collect the remaining money Hariṣchandra owed Viṣvāmitra, was causing the family much trouble on their journey. Chandramati was helping her son walk while tending to Nakshatraka's needs and demands. While they were in the forest, fires erupted, blocking their way. She then prayed to Lord Ṣiva and because she was a Pativrata*, the fires went out and their way was cleared. Seeing no other way for her husband to pay his remaining debt to Viṣvāmitra, she sold herself to a Brahmin named Kāla Kauṣika.

Her son was with her during her bondage to Kauṣika. Kauṣika and his wife were constantly cursing, insulting and giving this woman, who was once the wife of an emperor, menial tasks. One day, when her son went to the forest to gather wild fruits, he was bitten by a serpent and died. After finishing her assigned tasks in Kauṣika's house, she went to the forest that night to search for her son. Weeping in sorrow on finding the son dead, she took her son's body to the cemetery grounds in the night, since she must do

the chores at Kauṣika's house right from dawn. There, Hariṣchandra, who was sold to the cemetery-keeper Vīrabāhu, was on duty. Chandramati was unable to recognise him as her husband. When Hariṣchandra refused to allow her to cremate her son's body until the required fee was paid, she headed back to town to bring money.

Some thieves who had stolen the jewelry of the prince, afraid of the king's wrath if they got caught, dumped the jewelry in her lap and ran away. The king's soldiers, seeing Chandramati with the stolen jewelry, assumed she was the thief and arrested her and took her to the king's Sabha (*court*). The king sentenced her to death by beheading. She was taken to Hariṣchandra, who (*as an assistant to the cemetery-keeper Vīrabāhu*) was also the executioner. Husband and wife recognised each other and were overcome by sorrow. Duty-bound, Hariṣchandra raised the executioner's sword to perform his duty. However, her head could not be severed. Viṣvāmitra, Lord Brahma and the Dēvas appeared, gave them boons, revived Lohitāsya, and restored Hariṣchandra's empire to him. *Mārkaṇḍēya Purāṇa*

Chandrāngada – Son of Indrasēna, who was a son of King Nala. He married Sīmantini, daughter of Chitravarma. As he and some companions were going from his father-in-law's house by boat, the boat sank in the river. Some young Nāga* women carried him to Pātāḷa (*the netherworld*), where he stayed for three years. Meanwhile, since he did not surface when the boat sank, it was assumed that he had perished in the mishap. Sīmantini, assuming that she had become a widow, abandoned all ornamentation and she began constantly worshipping Lord Ṣiva. One day, she went to

the river to bathe. At the same time, Chandrāngada who had been in Nāga* Lōka (*in Pātāḷa*), also came to the river bank with the help of Takshaka (*Lord of the Nāga people at the time*) by pleading with him that his family will be mourning for him, and saw her. They recognised each other. Chandrāngada returned to his father's house. Chandrāngada and Sīmantini were married again. She ascended to the throne after Chandrāngada. *Skānda Purāṇa; Brahma Purāṇa*

Chandrāpīḍa – Son of Janamējaya (*great-grandson of Arjuna*) and his wife Kārya. His son was Satyakarṇa. *Kalki (Bhavishya) Parva*

Chandrasēna – A king who ruled the city of Ujjaini. A Yogi (*ascetic, or holy man*) named Maṇibhattu gave him a Chintāmaṇi (*philosopher's stone, a precious stone with magical powers*). His possessions were turning to gold by the power of the stone. Envious of his good fortune, several kings of neighbouring countries banded together and attacked his city. He started to worship Lord Ṣiva. Seeing him, a cowherder boy began to worship a stone Linga* and became totally absorbed. The boy would not respond to his mother when she called him to dinner and in anger, the mother kicked the Linga. The boy was saddened but kept his concentration on the worship. A golden temple appeared at the spot where the boy was worshipping Ṣiva. The enemy kings who came to attack the city were wonderstruck by the appearance of the temple, became friendly, and returned to their cities after visiting the boy. Hanumān informed the kings that a man named Nanda would be born in the eighth generation of the cowherd and that Lord Vishṇu will reincarnate and live there.

Brahmānḍa Purāṇa

Chandravati – Daughter of a king named Chandragupta. Realizing that her own father fell in love with her because of her beauty, she went to the top of Ṣrī Ṣaila and sang hymns to Lord Ṣiva. When Ṣiva appeared, she gave Him a garland of Mallika (*jasmine*) flowers and expressed her desire to be united with (*to become part of*) Him. Lord Ṣiva took the garland and became Arjuna (*white*). As a result, He earned the name Mallikārjuna. She joined Him (*became part of Him*). (*Ṣrī Ṣaila Māhātmyam is a 'Sthala Purana'**). *Ṣrī Ṣaila Māhātmyam*

Chāṇūra – He and Mushṭika were wrestlers in the Sabha (*court*) of Kamsa (*Lord Kṛshṇa's evil uncle*). They were very strong. Kamsa told them to kill Balarāma and Kṛshṇa, using foul means if necessary. Kamsa challenged Balarāma and Kṛshṇa to fight his star wrestlers. Balarāma and Kṛshṇa took on Chāṇūra and Mushṭika and killed them. *Bhāgavata*

Chapa – A Vidyādhara (*a class of demigods, similar to Gandharvas, with special magical powers including shape-shifting*). Husband of Madālasa. Seeing a small child near the Āṣram of Turvasa (*son of Yayāti*), he picked him up in his arms, and not knowing whose child he was, took him to Indra*. Indra told him that the child Hayahaya was the son of Lord Vishṇu, that Yayāti's son would come looking for him, and asked him to leave the child on the banks of the Kāḷindi river. Chapa did as Indra instructed. *Dēvī Bhāgavata*

Charmaṇvati – A river in a country named Daṣārṇa Dēṣa. The blood of cows killed in a Yāga by Rantidēva became a river and

was named Charmaṇvati. The Charma (*hides*) of the dead animals became the banks of the river. *Mahā Bhārata*

Chāru – Son of Lord Kṛshṇa and Rukmiṇi. *Bhāgavata*

Chārubhadra – (*Also known as Bhadrachāru*) Son of Lord Kṛshṇa and Rukmiṇi. *Bhāgavata*

Chāruchandra – Son of Lord Kṛshṇa and Rukmiṇi. *Bhāgavata*

Chārudēha– Son of Lord Kṛshṇa and Rukmiṇi. *Bhāgavata*

Chārugupta – Son of Lord Kṛshṇa and Rukmiṇi. *Bhāgavata*

Chārumati – Daughter of Rukmi *(brother-in-law of Lord Kṛshṇa*). Kṛtavarma's son married her. *Bhāgavata*

Chāruvēshṇa – Son of Lord Kṛshṇa and Rukmiṇi. *Bhāgavata*

Chārvāka – An Asura*. He performed Tapas* directed towards Lord Brahma. He asked for a boon of immortality. Brahma gave it to him but said if you make Brahmins angry with you, you will die. He became an ally of Duryōdhana. After the war, Dharmarāja (*eldest of the Pāṇḍavas*) refused to rule but after Munis and Kṛshṇa argued strenuously, he finally relented and came to the capital. The population, including Brahmins, went to welcome him. Chārvāka, faithful to Duryōdhana, was disguised as a Brahmin Sanyāsi (*Ascetic*) and mixed with the other Brahmins. He loudly proclaimed, as if speaking on behalf of the Brahmins, "He (*Dharmarāja*) had killed relatives, friends, even his Guru. What kind of king is he? We cannot accept him as our ruler." The other Brahmins were amazed at this and declared, "We do not agree with what he said. You have acted righteously." They realized Chārvāka was an Asura and was there on behalf of Duryōdhana. As they all

looked at him with anger, he died. *Mahā Bhārata*

Chātūkarṇa – A Muni. Sage Parāṣara taught him the Purāṇas and other scriptures. He taught them to Kṛshṇadwaipāyana (*another name for Vyāsa, son of Parāṣara*). *Brahma Purāṇa*

Chaturanga – Son of Ṣānta and Ṛṣyaṣṛnga (*Lord Rama's older sister and brother-in-law*). His son was Pṛthulāksha. *Padma Purāṇa*

Chhāya – Sangjna, wife of Sūrya (*the Sun God*), unable to bear his brilliance, left her Chhāya (*shadow*) with him and sought refuge at her parents' house. Since she looked exactly like Sangjna, Sūrya did not suspect she was not his wife. Chhāya gave birth to Ṣrutakarma (*who later became Ṣani, the planet Saturn*) and Ṣrutaṣrava (*Sāvarṇi*). Once, a dispute arose between her and Sangjna's son Yama. He kicked her with his foot. She gave him a Ṣāpa* that his foot would break and fall off. Yama complained to his father that his stepmother was ill-treating him. Sūrya, questioning Chhāya, discovered her real history and identity. *Mārkanḍēya Purāṇa*

Chēdipura – Country ruled at one time by Uparicharavasu and later ruled by Ṣiṣupāla. *Bhāgavata*

Chēkitāna – A king of the Yādava dynasty (*originally cowherds. Lord Kṛshṇa belonged to the same*). He fought on behalf of the Pānḍavas in the Mahā Bhārata war. When he battled Kṛpa (*one of the Gurus to the Pānḍavas. Drona's brother-in-law*) and rendered him unconscious, he became unconscious also. *Mahā Bhārata*

Chennabasava – Kumāraswāmi, born on earth by Lord Ṣiva's

direction. His mother was Nāgamāmba. His uncle was Basava, minister to King Bijjala. Once, Basava brought home some Prasād (*offering to God during worship that confers blessings on those who eat it*) from a devotee of Lord Ṣiva named Kakkayya. His sister ate it and became pregnant as a result. Basava was unhappy that his unmarried sister became pregnant. Lord Ṣiva appeared to him and informed him that Nāgamāmba was a companion of His Consort Pārvati, her unborn child was Kumāraswāmi, and there was divine purpose behind her immaculate conception. People started a whispering campaign that Basava's sister became pregnant while she was unmarried. King Bijjala summoned Basava and demanded to know how such a shameful thing happened. Basava told the king he should ask his sister. She was summoned to the court and told the king he should ask her unborn child. The king asked the question in a loud voice. The fetus said, "I entered her womb because she ate the Prasād of Kakkayya." The king said he wished to see the unborn child who then emerged from her right ear as a twelve-year old boy. (*Chennabasava Māhātmyam is a 'Sthala Purana'**). *Chennabasava Māhātmyam*

Chicchuka – A (*articulate*) bird with two heads. Once, while he was alone and sad in the forest, a king named Pavamāna saw him and asked, "Who are you? Why are you grieving like this?" He replied, "I was a man in my previous life. I became like this by committing the sin of killing Brahmins. I am performing Tapas* to free myself from sin. Bathing in the nearby holy stream named Gadādhara washes off sins." *Brahma Purāṇa*

Chikitāyana – Father of Chaikitāyana. *Chāndōgya Upanishad*

Chikshara – (*Also known as Chikshura*) A soldier in the army of the Asura Mahisha. He died fighting against Dēvi. *Dēvī Bhāgavata*

Chirakāri – Son of Mēdhātithi. He thought long and hard before doing any thing. One day, Mēdhātithi was very angry with his wife and ordered his son to kill her immediately. Chirakāri pondered on the fact that killing his mother is a great sin but it is wrong to disobey his father, too. He took all day to consider what he should do. In the meantime, Mēdhātithi's anger subsided. He went to his son, worried that he may have obeyed him and killed his mother. He was happy that his son did not follow through on his order. *Mahā Bhārata*

Chirutonḍa – A Vaiṣya* of the city of Kanchi. He was a Gandharva* named Tumbura in his previous life and was born as a human due to Durvāsa's Ṣāpa*. He and his wife Tiruvenganānchi had an only son named Siriyāḷu. The couple were devotees of Lord Ṣiva. They never would eat a meal until at least one ascetic ate a meal as their guest. One day, no one came to their house. Chirutonḍa scoured the streets looking for an ascetic to be their guest. After a long search, he found an old, sick couple.

He invited them to his house. They told him that they were devotees of Lord Ṣiva, they had performed a rite of worship of Ṣiva, they needed to conclude the rite, and that if they come to his house, he should give them whatever they asked for. Chirutonḍa happily promised to do as they asked. They told him that he must cook and serve his son's flesh. If his wife does not agree to this, their rite would be ruined, and therefore, he should go home and ascertain that his wife will go along. Chirutonḍa went home and related their demand to his wife. She asked him to tell them she is

willing to give them her own and her husband's flesh as well if they should so desire. Even though unaware that the old couple were Lord Ṣiva and Pārvati who came to test his devotion, he carried them on his shoulders to his house. The mother washed Siriyāḷu and laid him in her lap. Chirutonḍa then killed him. They cooked his flesh and served it to the old couple. The guest then said, "Is there not a son in your house? We do not eat in a house where the hosts do not have a son." Chirutonḍa said, sadly, "I killed our only son and served his flesh per your request. I do not have a son any more." The guest asked Chirutonḍa to call out his son's name loudly. Chirutonḍa shouted, "Siriyāḷu!" Siriyāḷu came in from the street and greeted his father with a Namaskāra*. Lord Ṣiva and Pārvati showed their true forms and praised Chirutonḍa and his wife for their respect for guests and their devotion. They revealed Chirutonḍa's previous life and also that Siriyāḷu was actually Kumāraswāmi (*son of Lord Ṣiva, also known as Muruga or Shaṇmukha*). Chirutonḍa was released from his Ṣāpa and resumed his previous form (*as the Gandharva Tumbura*). *Hara Vilāsam*

Chitra I – A daughter born from the semen of Kubēra (*the God of Wealth*). Budha* married her in the Gāndharva* manner. Her son was Chaitra. *Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa*

Chitra II – A king. He fought on the Kaurava side in the Mahā Bhārata war and was killed by Prativindya (*Son of Draupadi and Dharmarāja*). *Mahā Bhārata*

Chitragupta – Chitra, of the solar (*solar; one of the two major royal lineages, the other being Chandra, or lunar*) dynasty,

worshipped Sūrya (*the Sun God*) for a long time. Sūrya appeared and asked him to choose a boon. Chitra said, "If you are pleased with my devotion, make me confident and all-knowing in every thing I do." Sūrya granted him his wish. Thinking he would be eminently suited for the position of his record-keeper, Yama (*the God of Death*) had Chitra brought to him with his physical body intact, while Chitra was bathing in the ocean (*of salt*). Given the name Chitragupta, he writes down the good and bad deeds of every living being. Chitrāditya is another of his names. *Mahā Bhārata*

Chitrakētu – A king. He had many wives but none of them bore him a child. While he was depressed due to not having sons, a Muni named Angirasa came and helped him perform a Putra Kāmēshṭi Yāga* and gave the fruit of the Yāga to the king's first wife Kṛtadyuti. She bore a son as a result. The king started treating her as his favourite which made his other wives envious of her. Convinced that the king was favouring Kṛtadyuti above the rest of them because of her son, they killed the son by poisoning him. The king was devastated by the death of his son and was mourning his loss day and night. Sage Nārada and other well-wishers tried to console the king. They summoned the soul of the dead boy and said, "Your parents are overcome by grief at your death. Come back into your body and live out your remaining life and rule your kingdom." The boy's soul replied, "Who are my parents? How many different parents did I have in my various lives? What is the relationship between me, now a part of the Supreme Being, and these people?" So saying, the soul left. Chitrakētu overcame his grief. On Sage Nārada's advice, he purified himself by bathing in

the Kāḷindi river, and chanting the Mantra taught to him by Nārada for seven nights, attained the status of the Lord of Vidyādharas (*demi-Gods with special magical powers such as shape-shifting*) with his own flying vehicle. He performed Tapas and was able to see Lord Vishṇu.

One day, traveling around on his flying vehicle, he was in the vicinity of Mount Kailāsa and saw Lord Ṣiva holding court with His Consort Pārvati. He injudiciously laughed at the couple, saying, "Even if He is Lord Ṣiva, is it proper to embrace His wife in public? Should He not do this privately?" Lord Ṣiva also laughed, but Pārvati became angry and saying, "Do even great Sages like Nārada criticize us? Who are you to criticize us?", gave him a Ṣāpa* that he would be born to an Asura* woman. Chitrakētu was not upset. He said, "Curses and blessings, pleasures and sorrows, heaven and hell, are all the same. I am not unhappy because of your Ṣāpa. But I am unhappy that I slighted You, the Mother of the Universe." So saying, he saluted her with a Namaskāra* and left. Lord Ṣiva said to Pārvati, "Do you observe the indifference of the devotees of Lord Vishṇu? To an indifferent devotee, heaven and hell are the same." Chitrakētu, due to the Ṣāpa he received, was born as the Asura Vṛtra. *Bhāgavata*

Chitrakūṭa – A mountain. It was near this mountain that Bharata (*Lord Rāma's younger brother whose mother sought to make him king*) met Rāma as He was leaving for the forest (*to which Bharata's mother had Him exiled*). *Rāmāyaṇa*

Chitrāngada I – Son born to Satyavati by Ṣantanu (*Bhīshma's father whose first wife and Bhīshma's mother, was Ganga*). His younger brother was Vichitravīrya. Bhīshma, his half-brother,

faithful to his pledge to Satyavati's parents (*that he would not only give up his right to the throne but to ensure that no descendants of his would be there to claim the throne, he would never marry and have children*), crowned Chitrāngada to succeed their father Ṣantanu. Chitrāngada was vain and injudicious. He died in a battle with a Gandharva* warrior also named Chitrāngada. *Mahā Bhārata*

Chitrāngada II – A Gandharva*. He killed Ṣantanu's son Chitrāngada in battle. *Mahā Bhārata*

Chitrāngada III – Daughter of a king named Chitravāhana, ruler of a city named Maṇipura. Arjuna married her (*each of the Pāṇḍavas had at least one wife he did not share with his brothers, in addition to Draupadi, shared by all five*). She and Arjuna had a son named Babhruvāhana. Even after marrying Arjuna, she stayed in her father's place for a long time. Her son battled his father when Arjuna followed the sacrificial horse for Dharmarāja's Aṣvamēdha Yāga*. Both Arjuna and his son lost consciousness (*due to battle injuries*). Chitrāngada and another wife of Arjuna named Ulūchi, a Nāga* princess, both came on the scene. Chitrāngada blamed Ulūchi for encouraging her son to battle their husband and saying she grieved more for the husband than the son, begged Ulūchi to revive Arjuna. Babhruvāhana regained consciousness. Ulūchi revived Arjuna with the Sanjīvani Maṇi (*diamond with the magical power to revive the dead*). *Mahā Bhārata*

Chitraratha I – King of Angadēṣa. His wife and the wife of a Brahmin named Dēvaṣarma were sisters. *Mahā Bhārata*

Chitraratha II – Name Angāraparṇa gave himself after his defeat by Arjuna. *Mahā Bhārata*

Chitraratha III – Father of Ṣaṣibindu. *Mahā Bhārata*

Chitrarēkha I – An Apsara*. While she was dancing in Indra* Sabha (*court*), some deer came and watched her. Noticing that she was looking at the deer and not at him, Indra became angry and gave her a Ṣāpa*, saying, "Since you were so fascinated by deer, become a doe." She begged Indra for a release from his Ṣāpa. Indra told her that after she bears a son from the semen of Vibhāṇḍaka, she will be released from the Ṣāpa. Wandering around after becoming a doe, she was drinking water at a stream. Vibhāṇḍaka's semen had fallen in that stream. The doe became pregnant by drinking the water and gave birth to a human boy. The boy was named Ṛṣyaṣṛnga. He had a horn on his forehead. As soon as he was born, Chitrarēkha regained her Apsara form, abandoned the child and returned to Swarga (*heaven*). *Vichitra Rāmāyaṇa*

Chitrarēkha II – Daughter of Kumbhāṇḍa, Minister of Bāṇāsura. Usha's companion. Usha, after dreaming about meeting a handsome man, bashfully described him to Chitrarēkha. Usha was not able to say who he was. Chitrarēkha drew portraits of all living princes and showed them to Usha. Usha identified Aniruddha (*grandson of Lord Kṛshṇa*) as her dream lover. Chitrarēkha flew to Dwāraka using her special powers and brought Aniruddha to Usha's Antahpura* without anyone knowing. *Mahā Bhārata*

Chitrasēna I – Son of Arishyanta, son of Vaivasvata Manu*. His son was Daksha. *Bhāgavata*

Chitrasēna II – A Gandharva*. During the time the Pāṇḍavas were staying in a forest called Dvaitavana (*twelve year exile to be followed by one year incognito*), Duryōdhana and company went there to humiliate them, on the pretext of a picnic. They happened to be in the vicinity of Chitrasēna's abode. When Chitrasēna's guards asked the Kauravas to leave, as they were trespassing, they refused. The guards defeated the Kauravas and captured and bound them. Dharmarāja, hearing about the Kauravas' plight, sent his younger brothers Bhīma and Arjuna to release them. *Mahā Bhārata*

Chitrāṣva – Another name of Satyavanta (*husband of Sāvitri, whom she rescues from Yama, God of Death*). *Mahā Bhārata*

Chitravāhana – Ruler of city named Maṇipura. Each king in his dynasty previously had just one son. However, a daughter was born to him and was named Chitrāngada. Arjuna, during his pilgrimage (*which he had to undertake due to accidentally seeing Draupadi during her year with Dharmarāja*), came to his city. Chitravāhana welcomed him with respect. Arjuna asked him for Chitrāngada's hand in marriage. Chitravāhana agreed on condition that Chitrāngada's son by Arjuna should inherit his throne, since he had no son of his own. Arjuna agreed, and Chitravāhana gave his daughter in marriage to Arjuna (*each of the Pāṇḍavas had at least one wife he did not share with his brothers, in addition to Draupadi, shared by all five*). *Mahā Bhārata*

Chitravarma – A king. A daughter named Sīmantini was born to him after eight sons were born. He raised her with much love and affection. Some astrologers whom he consulted, predicted that she

would become a widow. Very sad to learn this, he kept his daughter ignorant of the prediction. He gave her in marriage to a prince named Chandrāngada and had him stay in his palace. One day, as Chandrāngada was traveling by ship, a hurricane caused the ship to break into pieces and sink in the ocean. Everyone aboard drowned in the ocean. It was assumed that Chandrāngada had died along with everyone else. However, the prince reached Pātāḷa (*the netherworld*). The king of the Nāgas*, who was a friend of Chitravarma, treated him with respect and affection, gave him many gifts and sent him back. Chitravarma and his people were very happy to see Chandrāngada return safe and sound. *Skānda Purāṇa; Brahma Purāṇa*

Chūli – A Muni. A Gandharva* woman named Sōmada was attending to his needs. She had a son named Brahmadatta by him. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Chyavana I – Son of Sage Bhṛgu. His mother was Pulōma. While he was in his mother's womb, an Asura* also named Pulōma, taking the form of a wild boar, carried her away. Annoyed, Chyavana slipped out of the womb and stared angrily at the Asura. The Asura was burned to a crisp due to the fiery stare.

He performed Tapas* for many years. Anthills covered him. One day, King Ṣaryāti was in the area, accompanied by his army and his daughter Sukanya. Chyavana, being covered by anthills, was invisible, but flashes of light were emanating from the anthill. Sukanya ordered the soldiers to dig up the anthill. Chyavana angrily arose and using his spiritual power, made the waste-elimination functions of the soldiers stop. The soldiers were in agony and the king, realizing that Sukanya's orders to the soldiers

were responsible for their plight, begged Chyavana to forgive his daughter's immature action. Chyavana told him that he would forgive the king and release the soldiers from their plight if the king would give him Sukanya. Chyavana gave Sukanya in marriage to Chyavana. Their sons were Āpravāna and Dadhīchi.

One day, the Aṣvins (*very handsome twin physicians to the Gods*) saw Sukanya, and said, "Oh! Beautiful lady! Why do you have such an old man for a husband? Come with us, we will show you someone suitable for you." Angered by their words, Sukanya informed her husband what they said to her. Chyavana told her to do as they asked. She asked the Aṣvins to show her a young bridegroom. The twins dived into the river to bathe. Chyavana also did the same. (*Alternative version is that the Aṣvins came to Chyavana's Asram. He asked the Aṣvins to make him youthful again and promised to make them eligible to enjoy Sōma when someone performs a Yāga. They asked him to take a dip in the river and dived in with him.*) The three of them emerged from the water, with exactly identical, youthful bodies. Unable to identify her husband out of the three identical young men, she prayed to the Aṣvins for their help and was able to pick out her husband. Grateful to the Aṣvins for restoring his youth, Chyavana told them he would see to it that they received Sōma at the Yāga his father-in-law was planning to perform. He took them to Ṣaryāti's Yāga and ensured that they received Sōma. Indra*, always jealous when he thinks someone enjoyed a benefit to which they were not entitled, angrily raised his Vajrāyudha (*a thunderbolt, Indra's signature weapon, literally 'weapon of diamond'*) at Chyavana. Chyavana used his spiritual power to make Indra's arm freeze in

that position. Chyavana performed a Hōma* from which an Asura named Munḍa arose. When the Asura threatened to swallow the Gods, a terrified Indra begged Chyavana's mercy and protection. Indra, relieved when the Asura disappeared, agreed to make the Aṣvins eligible for Sōma thereafter.(*Alternative version: When Indra tried to hurl a mountain at Chyavana, Chyavana sprinkled water empowered by Mantras at the mountain which then turned around and hit Indra. Indra lost consciousness as a result.*)

Chyavana performed Tapas for twelve years, submerged at the confluence of the Ganga and Yamuna rivers. One day, some fishermen threw a net into the river to catch fish and Chyavana was caught in the net along with fish. The fishermen, frightened when they saw him caught in their net, begged his forgiveness. Instead of getting angry, Chyavana said to them, "I have lived for twelve years with these fish. It is only fair that I should die with them. Sell me along with the fish." The fishermen reported the incident and what Chyavana said, to King Nahusha. The king came along with his council of ministers and requested Chyavana to forgive the mistake made by the fishermen. Chyavana asked the king to take his body and give fair value to the fishermen. The king told his staff to pay the fishermen a thousand coins. Chyavana said that is not fair value for his body. The king then directed that they be paid one crore (*ten million*) coins. Seeing that Chyavana was not in agreement, the king increased the bid to half his kingdom, then to his whole kingdom. Even then, Chyavana said it is not fair and asked him to think about it. As the king sat there wondering what to do, a Muni named Gavijāta came there and said, "A Brahmin and a cow have the same qualities.

Therefore, only a cow is equal in value to a Brahmin." On hearing this, Nahusha went back to Chyavana and said, "O Great Sage! How could I know what is fair value for you? Anyway, I will give the fishermen one cow for you." Chyavana was pleased and told the king that a cow is like Agni and Amṛtam* and is worthy of the respect of even the Dēvas. The fishermen received the cow from the king, brought it to Chyavana and asked him to take the cow and bless them. Chyavana blessed them and gave them and the fish an Āṣirvāda (*blessing*) that they would achieve Mukti*.

Once, Chyavana overheard the Dēvas talking among themselves saying that the Bhṛgu (*Brahmin*) family will be mixed with the Kuṣika (*a Kshatriya, or warrior*) family. Unhappy at the prospect of his family becoming contaminated, he decided to destroy the Kuṣika family to prevent the union. With this intent, he went to the home of Kuṣika. The king and his queen were very hospitable and asked him what they could do for him. He told them that both of them should serve him. They let the Muni settle in their palace and were attending to his needs. Chyavana lay down on the bed and asked that both of them should continually massage his feet and ordered them to not disturb him until he wakes up. Chyavana remained asleep for twenty one days. Forgoing sleep and meals, they kept massaging his feet. Chyavana woke up, got out of bed and without saying a word, left the palace and walked away. The king and queen followed him. After going for a while, Chyavana disappeared. When they returned to the palace with sadness in their hearts, they found him sleeping on the bed, and surprised, resumed massaging his feet. After another twenty one days, he woke up. They gave him a bath. He asked them to put him on a

chariot and pull it themselves. They fastened ropes around their necks like harnesses and were pulling the chariot. Chyavana was using a sharp stick to prod them. They were bleeding profusely, but continued to pull the chariot without complaint. Surprised by their patience and tolerance, he had them stop the chariot and touched them. They were instantly refreshed and became youthful. Praising their devotion, Chyavana told them that he will be meditating on the banks of the Ganga river and asking them to visit him the next day, left. King Kuṣika and his wife went to see him the next day. Using his spiritual power, he created the Nāga Lōka, complete with its magnificent palaces. After they entered his creation, it suddenly disappeared. They praised his Brahma-like power. Chyavana offered to give the king a boon. Kuṣika asked him why he slept for such a long time. Chyavana related what he heard the Dēvas say and confessed that he was hoping for an opportunity to give them a Ṣāpa*. Relating how his family and Kuṣika's lineage will be combined, he said the king's third son will be born with an aspect of Brahma. *Mahā Bhārata*

Chyavana II – Son of Suhōtra and father of Kṛti. *Bhāgavata*

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Dadhīchi – A Muni, the son of Chyavana. Once, while he was engaged in Tapas* at a holy place named Sārasvata, Indra*, suspicious of his purpose, sent an Apsara* named Alambusa to distract him. At the very sight of her, Dadhīchi ejaculated. The river Sarasvati (*in the Purāṇas, rivers are anthropomorphed into women*) took the semen in her womb, and a son was born to her. She gave the baby to Dadhīchi, who kissed the baby. He also said the child could prevent damage to a place even if there was a drought for twelve years and gave the baby back to Sarasvati.

Dadhīchi had great spiritual power due to his Tapas. His wife was Lōpāmudra (*also known as Suvarcha; different from the wife of Sage Agastya*). Once upon a time, the Asuras* were harassing the Dēvas and taking away their weapons. The Dēvas brought their weapons to Dadhīchi with a request to keep them safe. Dadhīchi secured the weapons but the Dēvas, indulging in pleasures, did not return for their weapons for a long time. Dadhīchi, using his spiritual power, converted the weapons into a drink and swallowed it. The Dēvas eventually came and demanded that he return their weapons to them. He told them that he drank their weapons, and it would be difficult to return them. The Dēvas insisted that he should give their weapons back to them. Dadhīchi told them,

"Your weapons are attached to my bones, so you will have to kill me to retrieve them." The Dēvas replied, "Do we have to kill you to retrieve our weapons? We will not incur the sin of killing a Brahmin." Dadhīchi then told them, "I will create a fire by my spiritual power and immolate myself. You can then retrieve your weapons from my bones." Dadhīchi immolated himself just as he said he would. Lord Brahma had the Chakra*, and Vajrāyudha (*a thunderbolt, Indra's signature weapon, literally 'weapon of diamond'*) fashioned from Dadhīchi's bones. Dadhīchi's wife, who was pregnant when he died, gave birth to a son named Pippalāda. *Mahā Bhārata*

Dadhimukha I – Son of Kadruva. A Nāga*. *Mahā Bhārata*

Dadhimukha II – A Vānara*. A servant of Sugrīva (*who, with his army of articulate monkeys, helped Lord Rāma*). He was responsible for security of a garden named Madhuvana. He tried to stop Angada (*son of Vāli, Sugrīva's older brother*) and others from stealing fruits from Madhuvana and was beaten for his pains. He went and complained to Sugrīva. *Mahā Bhārata*

Dadhyanga – Son of Atharva. Indra* taught him the science and art of Madhu (*according to an authoritative dictionary, 'science of sweetness' – politically incorrect version is probably winemaking*) and Pravarga (*a mystical ritual*). Indra warned him not to teach them to any one else, with the threat that he would cut Dadhyanga's head off if he violated the prohibition. The Aṣvins (*twin physicians and surgeons of the Dēvas*), aware of Indra's threat and desirous of learning the science of Madhu, beheaded Dadhyanga and hid the head securely. They affixed the head of a

horse to Dadhyanga and acquired from him the knowledge they wanted. Indra, having heard that Dadhyanga had violated the terms under which he was taught these sciences, beheaded (*cut off the horse's head*) Dadhyanga. The Aṣvins then fitted his own head to Dadhyanga. *Ṛg Vēda*

Daityasēna – Daughter of Arishṭanēmi and sister of Dēvasēna. *Mahā Bhārata*

Daksha I – One of the Prajāpatis*. He was born from Lord Brahma's right thumb. He married Dharaṇi, who was born from Brahma's left thumb. The couple had fifty daughters, including Kīrti, Lakshmi (*different from Lord Vishṇu's consort*), Dhṛti, and Mēdha and five sons.

Eight of the daughters were important, the eldest of whom was Sati. Daksha gave her in marriage to Lord Ṣiva. Once, Daksha attended a Yāga being performed by Lord Brahma. Ṣiva was there as well. Even though He saw Daksha, Ṣiva neither rose nor showed respect for him. This made Daksha angry with Ṣiva. Daksha would, from time to time, invite his daughters home and present them with sarees and gifts. But upset with Ṣiva for not showing him respect, he did not extend that courtesy to Sati. Sati stayed in her husband's home for a long time without visiting her parents. Once, having heard that her father was performing a Yāga, and eager to see her siblings, Sati went to her father's place even though she was not invited. Daksha asked her, "Why did you come here?" Sati asked him what sin she had committed to be unwelcome in her parents' house. Daksha told her, "Your husband insults and hates me. You were born to ruin my family's reputation." He berated and slandered Ṣiva. Unable to tolerate her

father's abuse of her husband, she prayed that Ṣiva would be her husband if she was born again and creating a fire by her spiritual power, immolated herself. Lord Ṣiva, on learning of the tragedy, came and destroyed Daksha's Yāga. Ṣiva then created powerful beings including Vīrabhadra to kill Daksha's forces. Ṣiva also severed Daksha's head. Responding to the entreaties of Daksha's wife, He allowed a goat's head to be attached to Daksha's neck. Daksha came to be known as Ajamukha (*Aja, in Sanskrit, is goat; Mukha is face or head*). Ṣiva then said to Daksha, "You will be reborn to a woman named Mārisha in the Chākshusha Manvantara (*reign as Manu**) and will be named Daksha then as well. I will obstruct you in every one of your endeavors." Furious at this vow of Ṣiva, Daksha said, "Since you gave me a Ṣāpa*, here is my Prati (*counter*) Ṣāpa: you shall be ineligible for Havya* that the Gods normally receive. You shall suffer a low status till the end of time." *Dēvī Bhāgavata*

Daksha was born to a woman named Mārisha and Prachētasas, she being married to all eleven brothers. Daksha continued to be a Prajāpati in this incarnation as well. While he did start creation, he eventually got tired and went to Tapōvana* to perform Tapas*. While he was immersed in meditation at a holy place named Aghamarshaṇa, Lord Vishṇu appeared and gave him a woman named Asikni as his wife and also advised Daksha to procreate by sexual reproduction (*this was the means of reproduction ever since then*). Daksha had sons named Haryaṣvas and Ṣabaḷāṣvas and sixty daughters including Bhānu, Viṣwa, and Sādhya by her. Daksha instructed his sons to go forth and procreate. Sage Nārada stopped them as they were about to obey their father and said to them,

"Why are you pursuing family life instead of trying to attain Mukti*? Stop your efforts." They gave up the plan to procreate before it got started. Daksha, learning that Nārada had thus interfered with his duty as a Prajāpati, went to Lord Brahma and complained. Brahma gave Nārada a Ṣāpa, to pacify Daksha, that he would be born as the son of a daughter of Daksha. Daksha then gave Nārada a Ṣāpa that he would be unable to stay in one place for any length of time. Daksha gave Brahma a daughter of his named Priya. Nārada was reborn as her son. *Bhāgavata; Brahma Purāṇa*

Daksha gave twenty seven of his daughters (*Tāras or stars*) to Chandra (*the Moon God*) in marriage. Chandra, instead of treating his wives equally, was showing extreme favouritism to Rōhiṇi and ignoring the others. Rōhiṇi's sisters went to their father and complained about Chandra's neglect of them. Daksha, saddened by his daughters' plight and angry with Chandra, gave him a Ṣāpa that he would waste away by consumption (*Tuberculosis*). Chandra prayed to Lord Ṣiva and begged for His protection. Ṣiva put Chandra on His forehead to protect him. This made Chandra even less approachable to his wives. Daksha went to Ṣiva and demanded that He give up Chandra. Ṣiva refused. Daksha was about to give a Ṣāpa to Ṣiva also when Lord Vishṇu appeared and resolved the situation. He split Chandra into two parts, gave one to Ṣiva and upheld Daksha's Ṣāpa by allowing the other part to wane and wax alternately and gave that to his twenty seven wives (*Tāras*). *Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa*

Daksha II – (*also known as Takshaka*) Son of Bharata, Lord Rāma's younger brother. He ruled a city named fot him, Takshaka

or Dakshapura. *Uttara Rāmāyaṇa*

Daksha III – Son of Chitrasēna, who was a son of Narishyanta. He had a son named Mīḍhāvamṣa. *Bhāgavata*

Dakshasāvarṇi – Son of Varuṇa (*the Rain God*). He will be the ninth Manu* (*the current one, Vaivasvata, is the seventh*). He will have sons including Dhṛtakētu and Dīptakētu. The name of the Indra* will be Adbhuta. *Bhāgavata*

Dakshasāvarṇi is the son of Daksha. In his Manvantara (*reign as Manu*), Lord Kumāraswāmi (*elder son of Lord Ṣiva*) Himself, with the name Adbhuta, will be Indra. The Saptarshis* will be Mēdhātithi, Vasu, Satya, Jyōtishmanta, Dyutimanta, Savana, and Havyavāhana. *Mārkanḍēya Purāṇa; Vishṇu Purāṇa*

Dakshiṇa – Daughter born to a Prajāpati* named Ruchi, with aspects of Goddess Lakshmi. Ruchi and his wife Ākūti also had a son named Yagjna, who was born with aspects of Lord Vishṇu. Dakshiṇa chose to marry her brother Yagjna (*which was not prohibited because they were the first couple in the time of Swāyambhuva Manu*, the first of fourteen epochs*). They had sons named Tōsha, Santōsha, Pratōsha, Bhadra, Ṣānti, Niḍaspati, Idhma, Kavi, Vibha, Vahni, Sudēva, and Rōchana. These came to be Dēvas named Tōshitas. *Bhāgavata*

Dala – Son of Parīkshit (*different from the grandson of Arjuna*) and his wife Suṣōbhana. He became king after his brother Ṣala was killed.

Ṣala had borrowed the horses belonging to a Brahmin named Vāmadēva. When the Brahmin came and asked for the return of his horses after Ṣala died, Dala got angry and said to his servants,

"This Brahmin is speaking with greed. Bring a poison-tipped arrow and I will kill him with it." The Brahmin calmly said, "The arrow with which you intend to kill me has already killed your son in the palace." The boy had died, just as the Brahmin said. Dala got even angrier. He raised his bow to shoot the Brahmin dead but found his arms paralyzed. Thus humiliated, Dala realized the great spiritual power of the Brahmin and begged his forgiveness. The Brahmin was mollified and restored Dala's arms to their normal condition and revived his son. Dala returned the Brahmin's horses to him. *Mahā Bhārata*

Dama I – A prince whose full name was Arindama. In his previous life, he was the son of a Brahmin named Yagjnadatta. Under his rule, he arranged for worship services (*with oil lamps*) in all the temples. Dama prayed to Viṣvēṣwara (*one of Lord Ṣiva's names, meaning Lord of the Universe*) in Kāṣi*. Ṣiva and His Consort Pārvati appeared before him. However, he was unable to see Ṣiva because of His intense brightness. He begged Ṣiva to give him the ability to see Him and Ṣiva granted his wish. Having seen Pārvati first, he described Her beautiful body. Pārvati was angered by this and made his eyes explode. Lord Ṣiva calmed Her down, saying "He is a devotee and like a son to us. Have mercy on him", and gave him a boon that his eyesight will not be lost. *Ṣiva Purāṇa*

Dama II – Son of Marut. His son was Rājavardhana. *Bhāgavata*

Dama III – Brother of Damayanti. Son of Bhīma (*different from the second oldest of the Pānḍavas*). *Mahā Bhārata*

Dama IV – An Asura*. Son of Ṣataṣṛnga. He had brothers named Sadama and Vidama. He and his brothers were attacking and

pillaging countries. When they attacked the city of Ambarīsha, one of the soldiers named Sudēva killed them. *Mahā Bhārata*

Dama V – Son of a king named Narishyanta. He was learned in the Vēdas and their auxiliaries (*e.g., Chhandas or poetic meter, Vyākaraṇa or grammar*). A woman named Sumana, daughter of Jārukarma, chose him as her husband-to-be at her Swayamvara*. Other kings who were at the Swayamvara, including Mahānanda and Vapushmanta, in a fit of jealousy, were planning to take Sumana by force. Sensing their plot, Dama asked the assemblage, "Is it not fair that the prospective bride should marry the man of her choice? Is it proper that she be abducted in this manner against her will?" The opinion of the audience was that by choosing Dama at her Swayamvara, Sumana had become his wife and that anyone taking her away by force would be guilty of stealing another man's wife. Dama challenged the conspirators to fight him if they wanted to take his wife and picked up his bow and arrows. In the ensuing fight, Dama killed Mahānanda. Vapushmanta was defeated and took flight. Dama then married Sumana in accordance with Vēdic rites.

Narishyanta crowned Dama as his successor and went to the Tapovana*. Vapushmanta happened to see Narishyanta in the forest, and realizing that he was the father of his enemy Dama, beheaded him. Narishyanta's wife informed her son of his father's murder by Vapushmanta. Dama, with his army, attacked Vapushmanta's kingdom and killed him in battle. *Mārkanḍēya Purāṇa*

Damaghōsha – Ruler of a kingdom named Chēdi. Lord Kṛshṇa's paternal aunt Sātvati was his wife. Ṣiṣupāla (See **Jaya**) and Sālva

were his sons. *Mahā Bhārata*

Damana I – A Muni. Bhīma (*different from the second oldest of the Pānḍavas*), ruler of a kingdom named Vidarbha, pleased him by attending to his needs and with his blessings and boons, obtained a daughter named Damayanti and sons named Dama, Dānta and Damana. *Mahā Bhārata*

Damana II – Son of Bhīma (*different from the second oldest of the Pānḍavas*), king of Vidarbha. *Mahā Bhārata*

Damani – Wife of Hlāda and mother of Vātāpi and Ilvala. *Bhāgavata*

Damanika – An Apsara*. Daughter of Mēnaka and wife of a (*articulate*) bird named Kandara. *Mārkanḍēya Purāṇa*

Damayanti – Daughter of Bhīma (*different from the second oldest of the Pānḍavas*), king of Vidarbha. She was born as a result of a boon from a Muni named Damana to her father. One day, while she was strolling in a garden, a swan spoke in a human voice, extolling the virtues of someone named Nala and said he is the only man eligible to become Damayanti's husband. Damayanti had her heart set on Nala from that moment. Her father announced a Swayamvara*. Not only all the princes of the land but even four Dēvas (*Indra*, Agni, Varuṇa and Yama*) came to the Swayamvara. In fact, the Dēvas sent Nala himself as an emissary to Damayanti to request her to choose one of them! Damayanti declared that she will marry Nala and not any of the Dēvas, and if that becomes impossible, she would rather lay down her life than marry anyone else. Still in the mood to test her love, Dēvas, including Indra, arrived for the Swayamvara, each of them disguised as Nala.

Unable to identify her beloved out of all the look-alikes, she prayed to the Dēvas. They all dropped their disguises and took on their real appearance. Damayanti chose Nala (*signified by placing a garland of flowers around the neck of the chosen one*) and married him.

As the Dēvas were returning to their abodes in heaven, Kali (*who is a symbol of the depletion of Dharma or righteousness in the world*), crossed their path, on his way to the Swayamvara, hoping Damayanti would choose him. The Dēvas informed him that the Swayamvara was finished and that Damayanti had chosen Nala. Angered by losing the opportunity to marry Damayanti, Kali decided to cause separation of Damayanti from Nala.

Once, as her husband was engaged in games of chance with his cousin Pushkara, Damayanti noticed that the dice were falling consistently in favour of Pushkara, and pleaded with her husband to stop gambling. Nala refused to listen. He sent his son and daughter (*both named Indrasēna*) to his father's house, by way of preparing himself for the trouble he would be in if he should lose everything.

Just as Damayanti had feared, Nala lost everything including the kingdom, and had to go to the forest to live (*Kali seems to have used Pushkara in an attempt to destroy the marriage of Damayanti and Nala*). Damayanti dutifully accompanied her husband to the forest. Once, as Nala was trying to catch some birds to eat, the birds plucked the single item of clothing he had from his body and flew away with it. Damayanti tore a part of her sari and gave it to Nala to cover himself. Nala, saddened by his wife's plight and unable to do anything about it, left her and went away,

hoping Damayanti would go to her father's home. Instead, she set about searching for Nala in the forest.

As she was roaming in the forest looking for her husband, a serpent was about to bite her. As she cried out in fear, a Bōya (*natives of the forest, hunters by nature and necessity*) killed the serpent. He fell in love with her beauty and expressed his desire for her. She gave him a Ṣāpa* saying, "If I am indeed a Pativrata*, this man shall die." Instantly, the Bōya died. Wandering in the forest, she came upon a group of Munis and greeted them with a Namaskāra*. They, using their Divya Dṛshṭi*, informed her that she would soon be reunited with Nala and live happily. Tired by wandering in the forest without food or water, she came upon a group of merchants and inquired after Nala and learning that they were headed for the kingdom of Chēdi, she accompanied them there. The queen-mother of the kingdom happened to see her and taking a liking to her, invited her to the palace. Damayanti related her story (*without specifics apparently, because the queen-mother did not know Damayanti's husband's name; see below*) and offered to serve her as a Sairandhri (*maid who helps a lady with hair styling, makeup etc., the same role Draupadi took on during the year she and her husbands had to remain incognito*) on condition that she did not have to talk to men (*men other than a woman's husband or 'Parapurusha'*), did not have to eat left-over food (*the actual word is 'Uchhishṭa', a concept that does not translate into English; the closest is eating out of a plate from which another person had eaten, without cleaning it out*), did not have to touch or massage feet, and will speak only to Brahmins who are willing to search for her husband. The queen-mother

agreed to her conditions and Damayanti entered her service, but did not know that her new Sairandhri was Damayanti. One day, a Brahmin sent to search for Damayanti by her parents saw and recognised her as Damayanti. Damayanti learned that the queen-mother she was serving was actually her mother's younger sister. Damayanti then went to her father's place. She asked her father to send Brahmins abroad to search for her husband, just as he did to search for her. (*Aware that her husband may not be recognizable, she told the Brahmins to speak certain words to which only her husband would know the answer she had in mind.*) The only person who responded with the right words was an ugly man who was a servant of Ṛtuparṇa, the king of Ayōdhya. Suspecting that the ugly man is Nala, but wanting to confirm his identity, Damayanti's father announced a second Swayamvara for her the very next day (*probably to limit the attendance*) and sent another Brahmin to invite Ṛtuparṇa to the Swayamvara. Ṛtuparṇa came in a chariot driven by Bāhuka (*the ugly man who was the only one who spoke the right response to Damayanti's coded message*) to witness the Swayamvara. As Bāhuka was cooking dinner for Ṛtuparṇa, Damayanti sent a maidservant to further test him. At the same time, she sent her children along with the servant. Bāhuka picked up the children in his arms, showered them with kisses and cried. Confident that Bāhuka is in fact Nala, Damayanti, with her mother's permission, invited him to the palace. Within his hearing, she asked, "Is it proper for Nala to leave his wife in the forest and run away?" In reply, he asked, "Is it not shameful to announce a second Swayamvara like this?" She replied, "It was done only to find Nala." Nala, by 'thinking of'* Karkōṭaka, regained his own

form. Nala regained his kingdom and lived happily with Damayanti. Singing the praises of Damayanti will save one from one's sins and bestow well-being and happiness. *Maha Bharata*

Dambha – Son of an Asura* named Viprachitti. Wanting a son, he performed severe Tapas* for many years. The worlds shook as a result. The Dēvas went to Lord Vishṇu seeking relief from the disturbance. He assured them that there was no danger and told them it was one of His devotees performing Tapas to beget a son. Lord Vishṇu then appeared before Dambha and gave him the boon he sought. A son named Ṣankhachūḍa was born to Dambha. *Ṣiva Purana; Dēvī Bhāgavata*

Dambhōdbhava – A king. He once went to the Gandhamādana mountain where Nara and Nārāyaṇa were performing Tapas* and haughtily challenged them to fight him. They defeated him. *Mahā Bhārata*

Dana – A Muni. He lived in an Āṣram named Badarika. Once, a king named Vīradyumna came to him and told him that he was worried because his son Bhūridyumna, who had gone hunting, had not returned. Dana told him, "If you are strongly attached to an object or person, you will be sad. If you do not have attachments, you will have no worries." After teaching this principle, the Muni, using his spiritual powers acquired through Tapas*, managed to reunite the king with his son. *Mahā Bhārata*

Danḍa I – Son of the Vasu named Āpa. (*He was the youngest of the eight Vasus who, due to a Ṣāpa*, had to be born as mortal humans to the Goddess Ganga, who also had to be born on earth due to a Ṣāpa. He was Bhīshma*) *Matsya Purāṇa*

Danḍa II – Youngest son of Ikshvāku, the progenitor of the Sūrya (*solar; one of the two major royal lineages, the other being Chandra, or lunar*) dynasty. He was cruel and vicious. Even as a boy, he harassed his playmates, and even killed a few. His father expelled him from the kingdom and told him to go to the Vindhya mountain. Danḍa went to the Vindhya mountain region, built a city named Madhumanta and was ruling it. He became a disciple of Ṣukrāchārya (*the Guru of the Asuras*, Ṣukra; Āchārya means teacher*) and befriended Asuras. One day, as he was entering Ṣukra's Āṣram, he saw Ṣukra's daughter who was performing Tapas*. Full of lust for her, he asked her who she was. She told him her name was Araja and that she was Ṣukra's daughter but he expressed his desire for her anyway (*A Guru's daughter was considered one's sister, just as the Guru's wife was treated like one's own mother*). In spite of her protests that she was his younger sister, being the Guru's daughter, he forced himself on her and raped her. Araja wept. Ṣukra learned of Danḍa's crime and expressed his anger by giving him a Ṣāpa* that it would rain mud over an area of a hundred square miles around his city. Accordingly, the whole city was totally covered in mud. A forest grew on top of the city. The forest was named Danḍaka (*covers parts of Chattisghar, Odisha, and Andhra Pradesh states*). *Uttara Rāmāyaṇa*

Danḍadhāra – A king of Magadha. He battled Arjuna in the Mahā Bhārata war. Both he and his elephant were killed by Arjuna. *Mahā Bhārata*

Danḍakāraṇya – An Araṇya (*forest*) named Danḍaka, located south of the Vindhya Mountain (*covers parts of Chattisghar,*

Odisha, and Andhra Pradesh states). It was so named because it grew over the ruins of the capital city of King Danḍa, of the Ikshvāku dynasty. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Danḍanīti – (*literally, administration of justice or punishment*) At the beginning of Kṛta Yuga (*the first of four in one Kalpa; followed by Trēta, Dwāpara, and Kali; the current one is Kali*), there was no ruler of men. The people lived righteous and moral lives, protecting each other. (*The characteristics of the four Yugas are distinguished by the number of legs supporting Dharma or righteousness as if it were a stool; four in Kṛta, three in Trēta, two in Dwāpara, one in Kali.*) As time passed, their Kāma (*desires*) and Krōdha (*passions or anger*) grew. People turned against Dharma, and belief in the Vēdas. They stopped performing religious rites and sacrifices (*Yagjnas and Yāgas*). The Dēvas went and informed Lord Brahma of the state of affairs on earth. Brahma wrote a treatise consisting of a hundred thousand chapters, detailing the functions of ruler, minister, treasurer and law enforcement and others required for the governance of a righteous society, including peace and war. He told the Dēvas that the book will help create a world of good heritage.

A being named Viṣālāksha emerged from Brahma's forehead and took charge of implementing the system detailed in the book. Realizing that the life expectancy of humans is too short to read and understand the treatise, he condensed it into one with ten thousand chapters. That version was called Vaiṣālāksha. Indra* reduced it to five thousand chapters, Bṛhaspati (*the Guru of the Devas*) to three thousand and Ṣukra (*Guru of the Asuras*) condensed it to a thousand. Several Munis made it even shorter.

The Dēvas then requested Lord Vishṇu to send a king to implement the principles of the book.

Vishṇu created a mind-born son imbued with His own power, named Viraja. Viraja was unwilling to go to earth and be king. Viraja's grandson, Ananta ruled the earth in accordance with Daṇḍanīti. *Agni Purāṇa*

Dānta – Brother of Damayanti. Son of King Bhīma of Vidarbha (*different from second oldest of the Pānḍavas*). *Mahā Bhārata*

Dantavaktra – Younger brother of Śiśupāla (*cousins of Lord Kṛshṇa*). Son of Vṛddhaśarma and his wife Śrutadēvi. Ruler of a kingdom named Karūsha. He was determined to avenge the death of his brother's allies Sālva and Pounḍraka Vāsudēva at the hands of Kṛshṇa.

As Dantavaktra was returning home from the funeral ceremony for his friends, he encountered Śrī Kṛshṇa and attacked Him with the intent to kill Him. Kṛshṇa killed him instead. As he died, a light (*his soul*) came out of his body and entered Kṛshṇa. (*Śiśupāla and Dantavaktra were the third and last incarnations of Jaya and Vijaya as Vishṇu's enemies due to a Śāpa**) *Mahā Bhārata*

Danu – Daughter of Dharaṇi and Daksha Prajāpati*. Wife of Sage Kaśyapa. Among her children were Śambara, Namuchi, Pulōmāsi, and Durjaya. *Mahā Bhārata*

Dāraka – A woodsman. He had a nephew named Pingāksha (See **Dharma Birds**). (*Kāśi Khanḍa is a 'Sthala Purāṇa'**.) *Kāśi Khanḍa*

Darbhaka – Son of Ajātaśatru of Śiśunāga's dynasty. He had a son named Ajaya. *Bhāgavata*

Darbhas – (*Sacred grass used in many religious rites*) When Garutmanta* brought Amṛtam* for the Nāgas*, he placed it on a bed of Darbhas while the serpents were taking a purifying bath. This is the reason Darbhas are regarded as sacred. Serpents' tongues split (*forked*) when they licked the Darbhas (*dry, hard and sharp*) to drink the Amṛtam. Lord Kumāraswāmi (*first-born son of Lord Ṣiva*) was raised on a bed of Darbha. *Mahā Bhārata*

Dāṣarāja I – Ruler of a country named Nishāda. He did many bad things, but was a devotee of Lord Ṣiva. His wife Kumudvati once asked him how he, being such a bad man, became a devotee of Ṣiva. He told her, "In my last life, I was a dog. One Mahā Ṣiva Rātri day (*on which devotees fast and stay awake all night to gain Ṣiva's blessings and eventual salvation*), I happened to see the lamp lit by devotees in a Ṣiva temple. I also attempted to eat the sacrificial offering they brought, but was shooed away, thereby giving me credit for fasting on that day as well. Because of the Puṇya* I acquired that day, I have this life, with knowledge of my previous life." He told her of his future lives as well. *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa; Skānda Purāṇa*

Dāṣarāja II – A king. Once a fisherman brought a girl, Matsyagandhi (*means 'with the scent of fish' in Sanskrit*), that got caught in his net and presented her to the king. She grew up to be a beautiful woman and as she was operating a boat on the Yamuna river, a king named Ṣantanu saw her and fell in love with her. Ṣantanu went to Dāṣarāja and asked for Matsyagandhi's hand in marriage. Dāṣarāja said he would gladly oblige if Ṣantanu agreed to make her son the next king. Ṣantanu (*who already had a son, Bhīshma, by his former wife Ganga*) returned home disappointed

and sad because he could not make that promise. His son Bhīshma, on learning the reason for his father's distress, went to Dāṣarāja and vowed that he will not seek to succeed to the throne and that he will ensure that Matsyagandhi's son will become Ṣantanu's successor (*and that he will remain a bachelor for life to make sure that he will have no sons that might seek the throne either*). Dāṣarāja then gave Matsyagandhi (*known also as Satyavati*) in marriage to Ṣantanu. *Mahā Bhārata*

Daṣaratha – A king of the Sūrya (*solar; one of the two major royal lineages, the other being Chandra, or lunar*) dynasty, son of Aja. Kausalya, daughter of a king named Bhānumanta, saw him and fell in love with him. Bhānumanta wished to give his daughter in marriage to Daṣaratha and invited him to his palace. Daṣaratha set out with his retinue but they were caught in a flooding river, carried to the ocean and into a big chest. Kausalya, who was abducted by Rāvaṇa, was hidden in the same chest. Daṣaratha married her right there. Jaṭāyu (*a huge articulate bird*) flew both of them out of there and carried them to Ayōdhya (*Daṣaratha's capital*).

In addition to Kausalya, Daṣaratha had two other wives, Kaikēyi and Sumitra. Once, Daṣaratha went to assist Indra* in a war against an Asura* named Ṣambara, and took Kaikēyi along. During the battle, a bolt on the wheel of his chariot fell off. Kaikēyi held the wheel in position by inserting her finger in the bolt hole. When he found out how she saved the day, Daṣaratha was very pleased and asked Kaikēyi to choose two boons he would be happy to give her. She told him she would request the boons later, when she wanted something.

Once, Daṣaratha went hunting and hearing a gurgling noise, assumed it was an elephant drinking in the stream and shot an arrow at the spot from which the sound came. Hearing a loud human scream, he went and saw that he had shot a Brahmin boy. Daṣaratha was devastated with grief at his horrible mistake, but was powerless to do anything. The boy, named Yagjnadatta, before dying, told Daṣaratha that he was collecting water from the stream for his elderly parents to drink. Daṣaratha took the water to the boy's parents, and after they slaked their thirst, informed them of the death of their son. Shattered by the loss of their son, they gave Daṣaratha a Ṣāpa* that Daṣaratha would also die from grief of separation from his children, and passed away.

A daughter named Ṣānta was born to Daṣaratha. He let his ally Rōmapāda adopt and raise her. Being without a son, he performed a Putra Kāmēshṭi Yāga* in order to beget sons. A luminous being emerged from the Yāga fire and gave Daṣaratha a bowl of rice pudding and told him sons would be born to him if his wives ate the pudding. Daṣaratha gave half the pudding to his first wife Kausalya and half to his favourite wife Kaikēyi. Each of them gave half her portion to the other wife Sumitra. His wives gave birth to four sons (*Sumitra had two sons due to the two portions she received*) and were named Rāma, Lakshmaṇa, Bharata, and Ṣatrughna. Daṣaratha pampered all four sons and performed their Upanayanam*. Just then, Sage Viṣvāmitra arrived and asked Daṣaratha to send Rāma and Lakshmaṇa with him to protect the Yāga he planned to perform. Daṣaratha was reluctant to send his tender young boys to the forest, but let them go with the Sage, afraid of his wrath and spiritual power.

One day, Daṣaratha was visiting a priest when Sage Durvāsa also happened to be there. Daṣaratha asked the Sage, "For how many years will Rāma rule the Kingdom? How many sons will he have?" Durvāsa answered, "He will rule for eleven thousand years. He will have two sons. He will suffer separation from his wife as a result of a Ṣāpa* the wife of Sage Bhṛgu gave to Lord Vishṇu."

Sage Viṣvāmitra enhanced the education of Rāma and Lakshmaṇa and taught them fighting skills (*there is no irony in the fact that many Sages taught military arts because most weapons were invoked, launched and their path controlled by the use of Mantras; many of these were obtained by the Sages through long and intense Tapas**). Rāma and Lakshmaṇa, in the process of protecting the Yāga, killed many Asuras including Tāṭaka and her sons. Viṣvāmitra took Rāma and Lakshmaṇa to the Sabha (*court*) of King Janaka. Rāma broke the bow of Lord Ṣiva as he lifted it to string it, which was the test for winning the hand of Sīta in marriage. Janaka, preparing to perform his daughter's wedding with Rāma, sent an invitation to Daṣaratha. Daṣaratha, accompanied by kings that owed allegiance to him, arrived and performed his sons' weddings (*In addition to Rāma marrying Sīta, Lakshmaṇa and the other two brothers married her cousins, who were also brought up by their uncle Janaka*). Daṣaratha, his sons and their wives and all the entourage that accompanied Daṣaratha returned to Ayōdhya.

Daṣaratha decided to celebrate the coronation of Rāma as the crown prince. Sages including Vasishṭha selected a Muhūrtam (*auspicious date and time*) for the celebration. The whole city was colourfully decorated. The people, who loved Rāma, were ecstatic

in anticipation of the happy occasion the next day. An extremely happy Daṣaratha went to Kaikēyi's palace to invite her to the ceremony. He could not find her where she would normally be. Finally he saw her, sad, lying in a bed in a dark room, unadorned with the usual ornaments and wearing old, dirty clothes. He asked her, "Why are you like this? I am preparing to coronate Rāma. You should be happy." She became even more unhappy and started crying. She then asked him to give the two boons that he had promised long ago. The boons she wanted were that Rāma be exiled to the forest for fourteen years and that her son Bharata be coronated instead. On hearing these cruel words, Daṣaratha collapsed. He cursed Kaikēyi. He looked sadly at Rāma, who had arrived on the scene. On learning Kaikēyi's wishes, Rāma pledged to uphold His father's promise. He left for the forest after putting on the clothing made from vegetable fibres, given to him by Kaikēyi. Lakshmaṇa and Sīta accompanied him. Bharata and Ṣatrughna, who were visiting an uncle, remained there, unaware of the drama at home. Daṣaratha was devastated by forced separation from two of his sons, born to him late in his life. Daṣaratha was especially fond of Rāma and could not bear to be apart from him. Daṣaratha died, literally of a broken heart. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Dāṣārha – A king. He married Kaḷāvati, daughter of the king of Kāṣi*. She did not, however, fulfill her role as his wife because she thought he was a sinner. She had been taught a Mantra named Panchākshari (*containing five syllables'*) from Sage Durvāsa. When her husband asked her to teach him the Mantra, she told him it is inappropriate for a wife to teach her husband. He then learnt the Mantra from a Sage named Garga. *Brahmōttara Khaṇḍa of*

Skānda Purāṇa

Daṣārṇa – Sister of Gāndhāri. Dhṛtarāshṭra married her as well. *Mahā Bhārata*

Dattātrēya – Son of Anasūya and Sage Atri. When Atri performed Tapas* directed to Lord Vishṇu, He said, "I have become your Dattu (*adoptee*)." He, therefore, became known as Dattātrēya. When Atri performed Tapas wishing for offspring, Brahma, Vishṇu, and Ṣiva all appeared and gave him a boon that he will have sons with aspects of each of them. His wife was Lakshmi. He taught the art of self-realization to Alarka and Prahlāda among others. *Bhāgavata*

The Dēvas, suffering harassment by Asuras, begged Him for help. He asked them to bring the Asuras to Him. The Dēvas provoked the Asuras to war and gradually moved the battle to near Dattātrēya's Āṣram. The Asuras, seeing Lakshmi in the Āṣram, put her on their heads, to steal her. (*It is believed that Lakshmi's presence conferred on someone not just wealth but everything good such as strength and courage. Regarding the presence of Lakshmi, her exact location is as important as the fact of her being there. According to a translation of Mārkanḍēya Purāṇa by Bibek Debroy and Dipavali Debroy, "When Lakshmi was on a person's lap, that person obtained a son. When Lakshmi was in a person's heart, that person obtained all his desires. But when Lakshmi was on a person's head, this meant that Lakshmi was about to forsake that person and leave for someone else."*) As the Asuras thus lost their strength, the Dēvas were able to kill them with their weapons.

The sons of Munis used to constantly serve Dattātrēya. They

would not leave him alone even though he requested privacy. He entered a lake to get away from them. The sons of Munis sat around the banks of the lake and would not go away. Someone then brought a divine damsel. They still would not leave. He proceeded to make love to the divine beauty. The sons of Munis finally left, leaving him alone.

King Kārtavīrya was serving Dattātrēya, uninvited. Dattātrēya said to him, "I am a promiscuous person (*meaning unworthy of respect*). Why do you serve me?" Kārtavīrya told him, "I am serving you because you are the incarnation of Lord Vishṇu." Dattātrēya's Apāna air (*vital air that exits the anus*) burnt Kārtavīrya's shoulders (*he is reputed to have a thousand arms*). Even then Kārtavīrya continued to serve Dattātrēya. Impressed by Kārtavīrya's devotion and prayers, Dattātrēya asked him to choose a boon. Kārtavīrya wished to get his arms and his kingdom back. Dattātrēya granted his wish. *Mārkanḍēya Purāṇa*

Dēva – A Manu*. Father of Prajāpati. (*Name Prajāpati, not a Prajāpati**) *Mahā Bhārata*

Dēvabhāga – Younger brother of Vasudēva (*father of Lord Kṛshṇa*). Father of Uddhava. *Mahā Bhārata*

Dēvabhūti – Son of a king named Bhāgavata of the Ṣunga dynasty. A man named Vasudēva (*not Lord Kṛshṇa's father*), who was a minister in the Sabha (*court*) of a king named Kaṇva (*different from the Sage who was the guardian of* Ṣakuntala), killed Dēvabhūti and annexed his kingdom. *Bhāgavata*

Dēvadatta I – Son of Uruṣrava and father of Agnivēṣa. *Bhāgavata*

Dēvadatta II – Conch (*each great warrior had a conch with a distinct sound, which they used to announce their arrival on the battlefield*) presented to Arjuna by Maya*. *Mahā Bhārata*

Dēvadatta III – A Brahmin. He was performing a Yāga wishing for a son. A priest named Gōbila was chanting hymns of Sāma Vēda (*the source of music*) at the Yāga. At one point, Gōbila sang the wrong note and Dēvadatta said to him "You fool! Why did you sing like that?" Angered by this, Gōbila gave him a Ṣāpa*, saying "Since you called me a fool, a fool will be born as your son." A frightened Dēvadatta fell at the feet of Gōbila and begged his forgiveness. Gōbila relented and said "Later, your son will become a great Poet." A son was born to Dēvadatta. His parents performed his Upanayanam* (*in the old days the ceremony was performed for Brahmin boys at age seven and marked the boy's eligibility to start his education under a Guru*). In spite of the Guru's best efforts the boy could not even learn the alphabet. He had no intelligence. His parents abandoned him in disgust. He acquired the name Satyavrata (*Satya is Sanskrit for 'truth'*) because he always spoke the truth. By Goddess Sarasvati's (*Goddess of learning and the fine arts*) grace, he became a poet. *Dēvī Bhāgavata*

Dēvadyumna – Son of Dēvajit. He and his wife Dhēnumati had a son named Paramēshṭi. *Bhāgavata*

Dēvadyuti – Son of a Muni named Sumitra. He prayed to Lord Vishṇu on Ekādaṣi, (*the eleventh and the most auspicious day of the lunar cycle; fasting that day frees one from sin*) of the Māgha month and was able to see Him. He taught the power of devotion for Lord Vishṇu to a king named Chitrasēna who had become a

fiend by committing many sinful acts. *Padma Purāṇa*

Dēvahūti – Daughter of Swāyambhu Manu*. Her mother was Ṣatarūpa, her sisters were Ākūti and Prakūti. A Gandharva* named Viṣvāvasu, enamored of her beauty, paid the price for his covetous thoughts by being banished to the netherworld. Her father and mother were travelling all over the world with her, seeking a suitable husband for her. Seeing Sage Kardama on the banks of the Sarasvati river, Swāyambhuva begged him to marry his daughter. Kardama married her. Dēvahūti was dutifully serving her husband and prayed to him for children. Kardama created a flying vehicle and took her all over the world in it and at the end of the tour, had her bathe in the Sarasvati river. Dēvahūti became pregnant and over time, gave birth to nine daughters named Kaḷa, Anasūya, Ṣraddha, Harirbhu, Gati, Kriya, Khyāti, Arundhati, and Ṣānti. Sage Kardama then announced to her his intention of becoming a Sanyāsi (*the fourth stage of a holy man's life, in which he renounces all worldly ties, including his family*). Dēvahūti countered with a request that he should wait until he gets his daughters married and gives her a son before becoming a Sanyāsi. Kardama advised her to pray to the Supreme Being and that God would be born to her as a son. She did as advised and became pregnant. Sage Kapila (*an incarnation of Lord Vishṇu, not one of the well-known ten incarnations; in this version, there were twenty one*) was born as her son and taught her the path of Yōga. She practiced the Yōga taught by her son and attained Mukti*. *Bhāgavata*

Dēvajit – Son of Sumati and father of Dēvadyumna. *Bhāgavata*

Dēvaka I – Son of Āhuka and brother of Ugrasēna. He had sons named Dēvala, Anupadēva, Sudēva, and Dēvavardhana and daughters named Dēvaki, Dhṛta Dēvi, Ṣānti Dēvi, Upa Dēvi, Ṣrī Dēvi, Dēva Rakshita and Saha Dēvi. Vasudēva married Dēvaki and all her sisters. *Bhāgavata*

Dēvaka II – Son of Dharmarāja and his wife Pauravati (*each of the Pānḍavas had at least one wife he did not share with his brothers, in addition to Draupadi, shared by all five*). *Bhāgavata*

Dēvaki – A Pativrata* named Praṣni during the Manvantara (*reign as Manu**) of Swāyambhu Manu. Desirous of having children, she prayed to Lord Vishṇu. Pleased with her devotion, Vishṇu appeared to her and revealed to her that He Himself will be born as her son in her next life.

Daughter of Dēvaka, Ugrasēna's older brother. She was Aditi, wife of Kaṣyapa Prajāpati* in a previous life. She took a human incarnation as a result of a Ṣāpa* by Kadruva (*another wife of Kaṣyapa*). She had sisters named Dhṛta Dēvi, Ṣānti Dēvi, Upa Dēvi, Ṣrī Dēvi, Dēva Rakshita and Saha Dēvi. Vasudēva married all of them. Kamsa was the Kshētraja* son of the younger brother of Dēvaka. Following Dēvaki's wedding, Kamsa accompanied Dēvaki and Vasudēva on their journey back to Vasudēva's home. While they were traveling, Ākāṣavāṇi* announced that Kamsa will be killed by Dēvaki's eighth child. On hearing these words, a frightened Kamsa was about to kill Dēvaki. Vasudēva pleaded with him "Please do not kill her. She is a woman. You can kill the children born to her. She is not the one who threatens you." Convinced by Vasudēva's logic, Kamsa spared her life and instead put both Dēvaki and Vasudēva in prison. Kamsa killed each of the

children born to Dēvaki as soon as they were born. Kṛshṇa was born as Dēvaki's eighth child. Recognizing that Lord Vishṇu Himself was born as their son, Dēvaki and Vasudēva prayed to Him. All of a sudden, the chains binding Vasudēva broke off, the prison doors opened and the guards fell asleep. Vasudēva was able to save Kṛshṇa by carrying Him to Gōkul (*a small village of cowherds*), placing Him in the bed of Yaṣōda (*wife of Nanda, who was asleep after giving birth to a girl*), and brought the baby girl to the prison and put her in Dēvaki's bed.

Kṛshṇa, while still a boy, killed Kamsa and released his parents from prison. He stayed with them (*first in Mathura and later in Dwāraka*) from then on. When Vasudēva left his mortal body, Dēvaki immolated herself on his funeral pyre. *Bhāgavata*

Dēvaki's Sons – In the first Yuga (*each cycle of Yugas, called a Kalpa, consists of Kṛta, Trēta, Dwāpara and Kali. Kṛshṇa was born in the Dwāpara Yuga of the present Kalpa, currently we are in Kali Yuga*), six sons were born to Marīchi, mind-born son of Lord Brahma, and his wife Varsha. They happened to see Brahma having sex with His own daughter and laughed at Him. Brahma gave them a Ṣāpa* that they would be born as the children of an Asura* woman. They were reborn as the sons of Hiraṇyakaṣipu. Later they were born as the sons of another Asura, Kālanēmi.

Yōgamāya (*Dēvi in a state of Yōga*) brought them and placed them in the womb of Dēvaki. These were the babies killed by Kamsa as soon as they were born. After Kamsa killed them, they went to Pātāḷa (*netherworld*). A long time later, Dēvaki and Vasudēva told Kṛshṇa and Balarāma (*the result of Dēvaki's seventh pregnancy that Kamsa never knew about, because Yōgamāya*

transferred him from Dēvaki's womb to that of Rōhiṇi, another wife of Vasudēva) that they wished to see their six sons that Kamsa had killed. Kṛshṇa and Balarāma went to Pātāḷa, and with the permission of Bali (*ruler of the netherworld after a previous incarnation of Lord Vishṇu, Vāmana forced him there*), brought the six and showed them to Dēvaki. To Dēvaki's eyes, they appeared like new-born babies. She kissed them and let them suckle at her breasts. They were released from the Ṣāpa by looking at Kṛshṇa and returned to their Heavenly abode. *Bhāgavata; Dēvī Bhāgavata*

Dēvakulya – Daughter of Ganga (*in the Purāṇas, rivers are anthropomorphed into women*). *Bhāgavata*

Dēvala I – Lord Brahma, after creating everything else, found Himself unable to create clothing. He went to Lord Ṣiva and requested Him to create clothes. Ṣiva was also unable to do it. A personification of Ṣakti (*one of the names of the Supreme Being; Sanskrit for 'power' or 'energy'*) emerged from Ṣiva in the form of a man, and was Dēvala. Siva looked at him and said to him "Make clothing. Threads were created at the same time as the Vēdas were born, and they are in Lord Vishṇu's belly-button. Go and fetch them." Dēvala, on his way to Vishṇu's abode, battled many Asuras*. He would invoke Ṣakti and She came and killed the Asuras. Later, he went toward the Mēru mountain to find weaving apparatus. Along the way, he killed Asuras and wild, predatory animals. Those killed by him were released from their Ṣāpas*. He obtained weaving machines from Maya*, made clothes and distributed them to the Dēvas. Ṣiva made him the ruler of a city named Āmōdapura. Ṣēshu (*the articulate ten-hooded Serpent*

on whom Lord Vishṇu reclines) gave his daughter Chandrarēkha to Dēvala in marriage. He also married Dēvadatta, sister of Sūrya (*the Sun God*). He had sons named Divyānga, Vimalānga, and Dhavaḷānga. Dēvala was also known by the name Dēvānga. Once the Apsara* Rambha saw him and overcome by desire for him, wanted sexual intercourse with him. However, he refused her request. Saddened and insulted, she gave him a Ṣāpa that he would be a Ṣūdra for five thousand years and then he will become a Brahmin. *Dēvānga Purāṇa*

Dēvala II – Son of a Vasu (*demi-Gods. Eight of them were given a Ṣāpa* that they would be born on earth as mortals; they were born as the sons of Ganga and King Ṣantanu, who were also mortals at the time due to a Ṣāpa. The first seven were drowned by their mother in the river Ganga per the terms of release from the Ṣāpa. The eighth, who agreed to live a long life on earth, was Bhīshma*) named Pratyūsha. Sage Vyāsa sent him to Pitṛ Lōka (*the abode of the spirits of dead parents*) to narrate the Mahā Bhārata. *Mahā Bhārata*

Dēvala III – Son of Akrūra and father of Anupadēva. *Bhāgavata*

Dēvamīḍha – Son of Hṛdika, who was the son of Bhōja (*a king of the Yādava dynasty*). He was also known as Hara. His wife was Mārisha who bore him sons named Sudēva, Dēvabhāga, Dēvaṣrava, Ānaka, Sṛnjaya, Ṣyāmaka, Kanku, Anīna, Vatsaka, and Vṛka and daughters named Pṛtha (*another name for Kunti, mother of Karṇa and the Pānḍavas*), Ṣrutadēvi, Ṣrutakīrti, Ṣrutaṣravaṇa, and Rājādhidēvi. *Bhāgavata*

Kuntibhōja was Dēvamīḍha's paternal aunt's son who adopted

Pṛtha as his daughter because he was childless. *Mahā Bhārata*

Dēvamitra – A disciple of Sage Māṇḍūkēya. He was taught a Samhita* of Ṛg Vēda hymns and taught them to his disciples including Saubharya. *Bhāgavata*

Dēvānīka – Son of Kshēmadhanva and father of Ahīna. *Bhāgavata*

Dēvāntaka – Son of Rāvaṇa. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Dēvāpi I – A Brahmin boy. Once, while his father was officiating as the priest at a Yāga being performed by a king named Ārshṭishēṇa, an Asura* named Midhu carried away his father, the king and the king's wife to a netherworld called Rasātala. One day, Dēvāpi asked his mother where his father was. She told him that an Asura had carried him away to the Rasātala. Thinking "Why should I live without my father?", he performed Tapas* directed towards Agni, and the Vēdas. They appeared to him and advised him to perform Tapas directed towards Lord Ṣiva on the banks of the Gautami river. He did as advised and by the grace of Ṣiva, was able to go to Rasātala and bring his father, the king and the king's wife back. *Brahmānḍa Purāṇa*

Dēvāpi II – Son of Sunanda and her husband King Pratīpa. He had brothers named Ṣantanu (*father of Bhīshma*) and Bāhlika. While still a boy, he went to the Tapōvana* and joined a group of heretics. On the death of his father, he was brought to the capital to be coronated since he was the oldest son. However, on learning that he had been mixed up with heretics, he was declared unfit to be king and sent away again. *Mahā Bhārata*

Dēvarāta I – Adopted son of Sage Viṣvāmitra. He was originally named Ṣunaṣṣēpha. He was tied to a post to be used in lieu of the sacrificial animal at a Yāga and was rescued by the grace of Lord Brahma. He came to be known as Dēvarāta as a result of the divine intervention. *Bhāgavata*

Dēvarāta II – A king of the sixth generation of Nimi's lineage. Son of Kētu (*different from Kētu, the Graha*). Lord Ṣiva gave the bow he used to destroy the Yāga being performed by Daksha Prajāpati* (*Ṣiva was enraged by Daksha's ill-treatment of His Consort Sati who immolated Herself*) to the Dēvas, who gave it to Dēvarāta. He and his descendants guarded and worshipped the bow. This was the bow Lord Rāma broke during Sīta's Swayamvara*. Dēvarāta's son was Bṛhadratha. *Bhāgavata*

Dēvarūpiṇi – A rock. A woman named Dharmavrata had become this rock due to a Ṣāpa*. Lord Vishṇu placed this rock on the head of an Asura named Gaya to prevent him from moving and stood on the rock. *Vāyu Purāṇa*

Dēvaṣarma – A Muni. His wife was Ruchi. Indra* desired her and was stalking her. Dēvaṣarma, when he needed to attend a Yāga, had a disciple of his named Vipula stay with Ruchi to protect her from Indra. *Mahā Bhārata*

Dēvasāvarṇi – Son of Vishṇusāvarṇi. His son was Rājasāvarṇi. *Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa*

Dēvasēna – Daughter of Arishṭanēmi. One day, while she and her sister Daityasēna were strolling in their garden, an Asura* named Kēḷi abducted her. Hearing her cries for help, Indra* came, rescued her by killing the Asura and raised her himself. When Indra asked

her what boon she would like from him, she asked for a suitable husband. Indra took her to Lord Brahma and asked Him who her husband should be. Brahma told Indra that only a valiant warrior is fit to be her husband. Indra, noting that Kumāraswāmi (*Lord Ṣiva's elder son*) had demonstrated great valour in killing the Asura named Ṣūrapadma, gave her in marriage to him. *Mahā Bhārata*

Dēvaṣravasa – Younger brother of Vasudēva. *Bhāgavata*

Dēvasthāna – A Muni. After the Mahā Bhārata war, he counseled Dharmarāja and imparted much knowledge to comfort him. *Mahā Bhārata*

Dēvātithi – Son of Akrōdhana. He married Maryāda, daughter of the king of Vidēha. Ṛchīka was his son. *Mahā Bhārata*

Dēvavarṇi – Daughter of Bharadvāja, wife of Viṣravōbrahma and mother of Kubēra (*the God of Wealth*). *Uttara Rāmāyaṇa*

Dēvavati – Daughter of a Gandharva* named Grāmaṇi. She and her husband Sukēṣa had sons named Mālyavanta, Sumāli and Māli. *Uttara Rāmāyaṇa*

Dēvāvṛtha – He was performing Tapas* on the banks of a river, desiring sons. The river (*in the Purāṇas, rivers are anthropomorphed into women*), concerned about what kind of son will result from his intense Tapas, assumed the form of a woman and fell in love with him. He took her as his wife and they had a son named Babhru. *Matsya Purāṇa*

Dēvayāni – Daughter of Ṣukra (*Guru of the Asuras**). Her mother was Jayanti, daughter of Indra*. She was in love with Kacha (*son*

of Bṛhaspati, Guru of the Dēvas.), one of her father's disciples. Once, Kacha was killed by the Asura disciples of Ṣukra. Dēvayāni expressed her concern to her father that Kacha did not return for a long time. Ṣukra, realizing that the boy was killed revived him using the Sanjīvani technique (*the science of bringing the dead back to life, the desire to learn which brought Kacha to the Guru of the Asuras, sworn enemies of the Dēvas*). As Kacha was leaving Ṣukra's Asram with the Guru's blessing after learning Sanjīvani, Dēvayāni asked him to marry her. When he rejected her advances citing the fact that as his Guru's daughter, she was like a sister to him, she gave him a Ṣāpa* that he will not retain the knowledge he obtained from her father. Because she unreasonably gave him a Ṣāpa when he did the right thing, he gave her a counter-Ṣāpa that no Brahmin will marry her.

One day Dēvayāni and Ṣarmishṭha, daughter of Vṛshaparva (*an Asura king*) and their female companions were bathing in a lake, after placing their clothes on the shore. A gust of wind mixed up their clothes. Ṣarmishṭha, who came out of the water first, put on Dēvayāni's clothes (*which the gust of wind had shifted to where Ṣarmishṭha had placed hers*). An upset Dēvayāni scolded her saying "How can I, the daughter of the Guru of your race, wear clothes that you had worn?" Ṣarmishṭha, angered by these words and saying "Your father works for my father, so you have no right to be arrogant with me!", she threw Dēvayāni into a nearby well and went home. Hearing her cries from the well, King Yayāti, who was hunting game in the area, pulled her out of the well. Dēvayāni narrated what had happened to her friend Ghūrṇika, who came searching for her and asked her to convey the information to her

father. Ṣukra arrived and asked her to come home. She refused, saying she will not set foot in the city ruled by Vṛshaparva. Unwilling to be separated from his daughter, Ṣukra also decided to leave the city. On learning of Ṣukra's decision to leave his city, King Vṛshaparva hurried to Ṣukra's presence, begged him to stay and to mollify Dēvayāni, sent his daughter to be Dēvayāni's servant-maid. Ṣarmishṭha was serving Dēvayāni.

One day, while strolling in the garden, Dēvayāni happened to see Yayāti and said to him "Since you held my right hand (*one of the Sanskrit terms for marriage is "Pāṇi Grahaṇam", meaning holding the hand, which is part of the marriage ritual*) while pulling me out of the well, you should marry me." Yayāti was hesitant to agree with her because, as a member of the warrior or Kshatriya caste, he is not allowed to marry a Brahmin woman (*There was a hierarchy of castes with Brahmins at the top, Kshatriyas second, Vaiṣyas or the merchant caste third, and Ṣūdras at the bottom. A man of any caste can marry a woman from his own or any lower caste but not one from a higher caste – a system that was, of course, set up by Brahmin men*). Dēvayāni, to avoid violation of proper protocol, obtained her father's consent (*a Guru of Ṣukra's stature would have been authorized to exempt Yayāti from the "cannot marry a woman of a higher caste" rule*) to the marriage. Yayāti and Dēvayāni got married. Ṣarmishṭha, still Dēvayāni's maid-servant, accompanied the couple to Yayāti's city. Yayāti allocated a separate residence for Ṣarmishṭha. Dēvayāni had sons named Yadu and Turvasu. Ṣarmishṭha, who was also of child-bearing age, requested Yayāti to grant motherhood to her as well. Yayāti complied with her request. Dēvayāni, noticing

Ṣarmishṭha's sons, asked them who they were and learnt that they were fathered by her husband. Angry that her husband broke his promise to her that he will not sleep with Ṣarmishṭha, Dēvayāni left him and went to her father and related to him how her husband had insulted her by commiting adultery. Upset that Yayāti had done his daughter an injustice, Ṣukra gave Yayāti a Ṣāpa that he would suffer premature old age. *Mahā Bhārata*

Dēvi – Wife of Prahlāda and mother of Virōchana. *Bhāgavata*

Dēvika – Wife of Dharmarāja (*each of the Pānḍavas had at least one wife he did not share with his brothers, in addition to Draupadi, shared by all five*). They had a son named Audhēya. *Mahā Bhārata*

Dhananjaya – Son of Kadruva. A Nāga*. *Mahā Bhārata*

Dhanusāksha – A Sage. When Mēdhāvi, the son of a Muni, spoke arrogantly to him, Dhanusāksha sent him to the city of Yama (*killed him*). *Mahā Bhārata*

Dhanvantari – When he was born, from a metal pitcher (*Kalaṣa, the kind used in religious rituals*), Lord Vishṇu appeared and said "You shall go by the name Abja." When he asked for a share of Vishṇu's portion of Havya*, He replied "My portion has already been allocated to others and it is not proper to rearrange it to give you a share. You will be famous in the second Dwāpara Yuga (*each cycle of Yugas, called a Kalpa, consists of Kṛta, Trēta, Dwāpara and Kali. Currently we are in Kali Yuga*). You will attain Divinity. Brahmins will chant four Mantras in your name." In the second Dwāpara, a Sage named Dīrghatapa performed Tapas* aimed at Abja, desiring the birth of a son. Dhanvantari appeared

before him and said he himself would be born as the son of the Sage. A son was born and learnt Āyurvēda (*an ancient, Indian system of medicine, Sanskrit for "the science of life"*) as a disciple of Sage Bharadvāja. He later became the King of Kāṣi *, also known as Divōdās. Kētumanta was his son. *Brahmānḍa Purāṇa*

Dhanya I – Wife of Dhruva and mother of Ṣishṭa. *Matsya Purāṇa*

Dhanya II – Granddaughter of Daksha Prajāpati*. Daughter of Svadha. She had sisters named Mēnaka (*different from the Apsara of this name*) and Kaḷāvati. Once, the three of them went to Vaikunṭha to visit Lord Vishṇu. While they were there, Sanatkumāras (*great divine Sages, perennially young mind-born sons of Brahma*) also came there to visit Vishṇu. Dhanya violated protocol, not standing up respectfully when she saw them. The Sages gave her a Ṣāpa* that she would be born as a mortal (*human*) woman. When she begged them for mercy, they told her "You will marry King Janaka. Sīta (*Consort of Lord Vishṇu while He was Rāma*) will be your daughter." *Ṣiva Purāṇa*

Dhānyamāli – A Dēva woman. Lord Ṣiva had given her a flying vehicle, which she used to travel all over the various Lōkas (*worlds*). A Muni named Ṣāṇḍilya once saw her and falling in love with her, asked her to have sex with him. She was having a period at the time and told him she would come to him after her period. After she had a bath at the end of her period, Rāvaṇa happened to see her, fell in love and had sex with her. She instantly gave birth to a son named Atikāya. Afterwards, she went to Ṣāṇḍilya and told him that Rāvaṇa had raped her. Ṣāṇḍilya, angry with her, gave her a Ṣāpa* that she would become a crocodile. When she begged him

for release from the Ṣāpa, he told her that she would be set free from the Ṣāpa when the Vānara* Hanumān, on an errand for Lord Rāma, kicks her. When Hanumān came for the Sanjīvani herb (*to revive Lakshmaṇa who was in a coma*), the crocodile which Dhānyamāli had become, caught his foot in her jaw. When Hanumān kicked at her to release his foot, she regained her original form and went on her way. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Dhānyamālini – An Asura* female. She was one of the female Asuras who were given guard duty when Sīta was a prisoner in the Aṣōka garden. Rāvaṇa would often come and ask Sīta, with enticements, to love him. Dhānyamālini said to him "Why do you seek love with someone who does not like you? Make love to me." *Rāmāyaṇa*

Dhara I – One of the eight Vasus. Son of Dhūmra and her husband Prajāpati. His wife was Kaḷyāṇi. He had sons named Draviṇa, Hatahavya, Prāṇa, Havyavaha, Ramaṇa and Ṣiṣira.

Matsya Purāṇa; Mahā Bhārata

Dhara II – Wife of Drōṇa (*not the archery Guru of the Pānḍavas and Kauravas*). She and her husband together performed Tapas* directed towards Lord Vishṇu. When a long time passed without an appearance by Vishṇu, they both immolated themselves in a holy fire. Ākāṣavāṇi* informed them that Lord Vishṇu Himself would be their son in their next life. She was born as Yaṣōda. *Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa*

Dharaṇi – A woman born from Lord Brahma's left thumb. She married Daksha Prajāpati*. They had fifty daughters including Kīrti, Lakshmi (*different from the Goddess of Wealth*), Dhṛti,

Aṣvani, Simhika, Diti, and Aditi as well as five sons. *Mahā Bhārata*

Dharātra – Son of Ṣukra (*The Guru of the Asuras**). *Mahā Bhārata*

Dharma – A Manu*. He was born from Lord Brahma's right hand. He married the daughters of Dharaṇi, among whom were Kīrti, Lakshmi (*different from the Goddess of Wealth*), Dhṛti, Mēdha and Lajja. He had sons named Ṣama, Kāma, and Hara. *Mahā Bhārata*

Dharma birds – Four (*articulate*) birds named Pingāksha, Virāṭa, Vṛta, and Sumukha. They were the sons of Drōṇa (*an articulate bird; not the archery Guru of the Kauravas and Pānḍavas*). Their mother was Tārkshi. She was flying over Kurukshētra (*the Mahā Bhārata battlefield*) when an arrow shot by Arjuna hit her and broke open her stomach. Her eggs fell to the ground. The bell from the neck of Bhagadatta's elephant fell on top of her eggs and covered them. A Sage named Ṣamīka happened to hear the noise of the newly hatched birds under the bell, picked them up and gave them a home. They told the Sage their story and left for a city named Vindhya. They were performing Tapas* there. A Sage named Jaimini came to them with doubts about some of the details of the Mahā Bhārata, which they cleared.

These birds were sons of of a Brahmin named Sukṛṣa. Once Indra* came to Sukṛṣa disguised as a bird and asked him for human flesh as food. Sukṛṣa asked his sons to let themselves be eaten by the bird but they refused his request. Sukṛṣa gave his sons a Ṣāpa* that they would be born to non-human mothers. They

begged their father to forgive their fault. The father relented and told them that while they were birds, they would have human speech and be well-versed in the arts and sciences. *Mārkaṇḍēya Purāṇa*

Dharmadhwaja – Son of Hamsadhwaja. He had a brother named Kṛṣadhwaja. His wife was Mādhavi and their daughter was Tulasi. *Brahma Vaivarta Purana*

Dharmagupta – Son of a king named Satyaratha. Satyaratha was killed in a war. His grief-stricken and pregnant wife went away to the forest and gave birth to Dharmagupta there. One day, while she was slaking her thirst at a lake, a crocodile grabbed her and carried her away. A Brahmin woman happened to see the crying boy who had lost both his parents and took him home to a city named Ṣāṇḍilya. There, Dharmagupta received an education, along with her son. One day, while he was strolling in a garden, the daughter of Chitraratha, a Gandharva* king, saw him. They fell in love with each other and got married. With an army provided to him by his father-in-law, Dharmagupta attacked Durmarshaṇa, who had killed his father, defeated him and regained his kingdom. All these happy events in his life occurred because he worshipped Sūrya (*the Sun God*) at dawn. *Skānda Purāṇa*

Dharmakīrti – A king of the Chandra Vamṣa (*lunar dynasty; one of the two major royal lineages, the other being Sūrya, or solar*). He was not a righteous ruler. Once, while on a hunt, he chased an animal for a long distance and got separated from his retinue. While searching for them, he reached the shores of the Rēva river where he saw some people performing a religious ritual on the

occasion of Ēkādaṣi (*the eleventh day of the lunar cycle, on which devotees fast and perform worship*) and joined them. By doing so, he attained the heavenly abode (*that he would not have due to his immoral behaviour otherwise*). In his next incarnation, he was born as the son of Gālava and was named Bhadraṣīla. *Nāradīya Purāṇa*

Dharmarāja – Eldest son of King Pānḍu. Kunti's Kshētraja* son (*a Ṣāpa* prevented Pānḍu from having sex with his wives*) by Dharma (*another name for Yama, the God of Death*). The name Yudhishṭhira was given to him and announced by Ākāṣavāṇi* because he was Dharma's son and because of his constancy in supporting Dharma (*righteousness*). After the demise of King Pānḍu (*caused by the Ṣāpa becoming operative by his amorous advances towards his younger wife Mādri*), Kunti went to Hastināpura, the imperial capital with her and Mādri's sons. Dharmarāja was treating Dhṛtarāshṭra as his own father, with respect and devotion. The people were pleased with him due to his excellent and virtuous behaviour. He was made the crown prince.

Dharmarāja was well aware that Duryōdhana was filled with hatred for himself and his brothers and was trying to cause them harm. He chose not to share the information with his brothers. Dhṛtarāshṭra asked the Pānḍavas to journey to Vāraṇāsi (*present-day Benares*). Dharmarāja assumed that there must be a good reason for his suggestion. Vidura (*Dharmarāja's other uncle; he was respected but powerless because his mother was a palace servant, not a princess*) informed Dharmarāja of Duryōdhana's evil intentions. Dharmarāja conveyed to his brothers the information he received from Vidura that the rest house built for

them on their route to Vāraṇāsi consisted of oil-based materials. They bypassed the house of wax and travelled through a tunnel built by a miner sent for the purpose by Vidura. The house was burned down afterwards. As they were travelling through the forest, Hiḍimbi (*sister of Asura* named Hiḍimba whom Bhīma killed*) saw Bhīma and, madly in love with him, expressed her desire for him. When Bhīma rudely rejected her advances, Dharmarāja took pity on her and requested his brother to fulfill her desire (see **Ghaṭōtkacha**).

The Pāṇḍavas, after transiting the forest, arrived at a town called Ēkachakrapura and took refuge in the house of a Brahmin family, themselves disguised as Brahmins. One day, on returning from going around the neighbourhood seeking Bhiksha*, Dharmarāja saw Bhīma in warrior's attire and ready for battle. When he was informed that Kunti (*their mother*) had volunteered to send her son in lieu of the Brahmin family's young son to an Asura named Baka (*the townspeople made an agreement with Baka to send him one person each day as his meal, and in return he would not engage in wholesale massacre of the town folk*) he was upset. He was concerned that, by sending Bhīma as a sacrificial offering to Baka, the family would lose its best defence since it was Bhīma who protected them all against adversity, e.g., from the Asura Hiḍimba and from being incinerated in the wax house. But he could not countermand their mother's promise to the Brahmin family. Kunti reassured Dharmarāja that no harm would come to Bhīma, because of his enormous strength. Sure enough, Bhīma returned safely, after killing the Asura Baka.

Hearing that King Drupada had announced a Swayamvara* (*this*

one and the Swayamvara for Sīta were unusual in that they involved a test of strength or skill in lieu of the bride's choice) for his daughter, Dharmarāja set out to attend it, accompanied by his brothers and mother. On the way, a Gandharva* named Angāraparṇa tried to block them. Arjuna defeated him and brought him to Dharmarāja, bound hand and foot. Dharmarāja took pity on him and had him released, even though he had attacked them without any provocation. That night, Sage Vyāsa (*biological father of Pānḍu, Dhṛtarāshṭra, and Vidura*) appeared to him. Dharmarāja paid homage to him, treating him with respect as his Guru and obtained his blessings. Sage Vyāsa also advised him to go to King Drupada's Sabha (*court*). The Pānḍavas went there and were observing the proceedings as spectators, being disguised as Brahmins. As beautiful as the princess was, it did not occur to Dharmarāja that he should desire her. As he watched several princes try to hit the mechanical fish (see **Arjuna**), Dharmarāja was not tempted to attempt the task himself. Arjuna, though, wanted to try, and asked Dharmarāja's permission to do so. Dharmarāja gave his consent and his blessing to Arjuna. Arjuna succeeded where many princes had failed, and hit the fish easily. Bhīma and Arjuna shouted from the entrance to the house, "We brought a Bhiksha (*alms*)." Kunti replied, before seeing what they had brought, "The five of you share it." Once she saw that the Bhiksha was Draupadi, she was ashamed of her hasty response and thought "Why did I say something so immoral? My words had never proved false before." Dharmarāja tried to console her and told her that since Arjuna had won Draupadi, he alone should marry her. Arjuna protested that he could not marry while his elder

brother remained unmarried and suggested that Dharmarāja should marry Draupadi. However, all five brothers desired Draupadi and bearing in mind Sage Vyāsa's directive and Kunti's command, they finally decided that all five of them would marry her. King Drupada was shocked to hear their decision and appealed to them to reconsider their abnormal and unique proposal. Just then, Sage Vyāsa arrived and giving Drupada Divya Dṛshṭi*, made him see the previous lives of the Pāṇḍavas. Drupada then agreed to his daughter marrying all five brothers (see **Indrasēna**). Dharmarāja and his brothers stayed there for some time after the marriage. They followed Sage Nārada's recommendation for Draupadi to spend one year out of each five-year cycle with each husband. Dharmarāja had another wife (*each of the Pāṇḍavas had at least one wife he did not share with his brothers, in addition to Draupadi, shared by all five*), Dēvika, from another Swayamvara. Dharmarāja and Dēvika had a son named Youdhēya. He and another wife named Pauravati had a son named Dēvaka. His son by Draupadi was named Prativindya. *Bhāgavata*

After they stayed in Drupada's city for some time, Vidura visited them and told them that Dhṛtarāshṭra had asked him to bring the Pāṇḍavas to Hastināpura. Even though he had not forgotten the many attempts by Duryōdhana to harm them, Dharmarāja felt that no harm would come to them as long as Vidura and Kṛshṇa were around and went to Hastināpura along with Draupadi, Kunti and his brothers. After they stayed there a while, Dhṛtarāshṭra gave Dharmarāja half the kingdom and asked him to make his home in Khāṇḍavaprastha. Viṣvakarma* built the city of Indraprastha for the Pāṇḍavas. Dharmarāja ruled his kingdom righteously,

providing security for all the people and protecting the social structure.

Then one day, Sage Nārada came visiting and after praising the fabulous Sabha (*court*) built by Maya* and imparting some political insights to Dharmarāja, suggested that he should perform the Rājasūya Yāga* that his ancestors such as emperor Hariṣchandra had performed in the past. He also mentioned that if the Yāga is completed without an interruption, a reduction in the population of the empire will occur (*in wars against armies of kings who do not accept the primacy of the performer of the Yāga*). As much as Dharmarāja wanted to perform the Yāga, worry about the harm to the population mentioned by the Sage held him back. Sages including Dhaumya as well as his brothers encouraged Dharmarāja to undertake the Yāga. Dharmarāja, not yet convinced how to proceed, invited Lord Kṛshṇa and when He arrived, asked His opinion on the matter. Kṛshṇa also suggested that the Yāga is a good deed (*The Kṛshṇa Avatāra was undertaken by Lord Vishṇu for the primary purpose of reducing the burden on Bhūmi, Mother Earth*). Accompanied by Bhīma and Arjuna, He proceeded on a mission of Digvijaya (*meaning 'Victory in all directions', tour of world conquest*), with intent to kill evil and powerful Asuras including Jarāsandha. Nakula and Sahadēva also went and defeated several kings and brought much wealth back as tribute. Close relatives, including Dhṛtarāshṭra and his family were invited to the Yāga. Dharmarāja offered the first Arghya (*offering of water to welcome a guest*) to Lord Kṛshṇa, in effect treating Him with great respect as the guest of honour. Bhīshma and the other elders all agreed that Lord Kṛshṇa deserved the honour. But

Ṣiṣupāla (*a cousin of Kṛshṇa who hated Him*) was angered by the honour accorded to Kṛshṇa and started to leave the court. Dharmarāja was humbly begging him to stay. The more Dharmarāja tried to pacify him, the harsher Ṣiṣupāla's abuse of Kṛshṇa became. Finally, Kṛshṇa's patience was exhausted (*Background: When Ṣiṣupāla was born, there was a prophecy that he will die at the hands of Kṛshṇa. Ṣiṣupāla's mother, who was a paternal aunt of Kṛshṇa, obtained a promise from Kṛshṇa that He would excuse one hundred faults of her son before killing him, probably hoping that her son would not commit so many bad deeds. As it happened, Kṛshṇa had already forgiven ninety nine acts of misbehaviour by Ṣiṣupāla.*). Kṛshṇa dispatched Ṣiṣupāla using His Chakra*. The Yāga was successfully completed soon afterwards. The royal guests left after they were duly felicitated and showered with gifts by Dharmarāja.

However, fascinated by the marvelous palace Maya Sabha, Duryōdhana stayed a while along with his brothers and retinue. After he stepped gingerly over what looked like a pool of water but was solid floor, Duryōdhana mistook a pool of water for solid ground and got his clothes wet. Bhīma and others, including Draupadi, were watching and roared with laughter at Duryōdhana's mishap. Dharmarāja had fresh dry clothing brought and given to Duryōdhana. Duryōdhana did not feel grateful to Dharmarāja for his considerate behaviour. Instead, he burned with jealousy at the fabulous wealth of the Pāṇḍavas. He was also furious with Draupadi for her derisive laughter at his humiliation. On his return home, he persuaded Dhṛtarāshṭra to agree to hold a gambling session with Dharmarāja (*which was going to be fixed by*

his uncle Ṣakuni), for the purpose of stealing the wealth of the Pāṇḍavas by deceit. Dhṛtarāshṭra sent his half-brother Vidura to invite Dharmarāja to the games of chance. Dharmarāja accepted the invitation (*he had a vow that he would never decline an invitation to games of chance*) and accompanied by Draupadi and his brothers, he went to Hastināpura. After conversing with Dharmarāja in a very friendly and pleasant manner for some time, Duryōdhana suggested they could roll some dice, just to while away the time. Instead of rolling the dice himself, Duryōdhana had Ṣakuni play on his behalf. Ṣakuni was, of course, cheating, using crooked dice. Dharmarāja kept losing but continued to play, eventually wagering and losing his kingdom, his brothers, himself, and finally Draupadi. Duryōdhana humiliated Draupadi in the open court, even tried to strip her clothing. Dhṛtarāshṭra, however, foiled his sons' plans, giving the Pāṇḍavas' freedom and their kingdom back, as boons to Draupadi. The Pāṇḍavas returned to Indraprastha. Soon afterwards, an emissary named Prātikāmi came and said Dhṛtarāshṭra summoned them again. Dharmarāja, his brothers and Draupadi went again. Ṣakuni taunted Dharmarāja for taking his kingdom back, as a donation from Dhṛtarāshṭra who felt sorry for Draupadi. Ṣakuni and Dharmarāja gambled again. This time though, the only wager was that the losers (*Dharmarāja, his brothers and Draupadi or Duryōdhana and his brothers*) will have to spend twelve years of exile in the forest followed by a year incognito, with a proviso that if exposed during the incognito year, they will have to repeat the whole thirteen year cycle. Dharmarāja was defrauded again, and lost.

In accordance with the terms of the game, Dharmarāja left for

the forest, accompanied by his brothers and Draupadi. Many citizens of their kingdom followed them into the forest. Dharmarāja, worried by his lack of resources to provide hospitality to their followers, which he was obliged to do being a Kshatriya, fainted. Sage Dhaumya revived him, consoled him and advised him to pray to Sūrya (*the Sun God*). Sūrya gave him an Akshaya Pātra (*a magical vessel*) that would allow whatever is cooked in it to be enough for all the people who are present.

One day their uncle Vidura was observed approaching their location. Dharmarāja was concerned that he might have been sent by Dhṛtarāshṭra to take away the few weapons they had with them. But Vidura said he came there, having been expelled from his court by Dhṛtarāshṭra. Soon afterwards, however, Sanjaya (*a devoted and trusted counselor of Dhṛtarāshṭra*) arrived and announced that Dhṛtarāshṭra sent him to bring Vidura back. Dharmarāja advised Vidura to go back and help the old blind King Dhṛtarāshṭra.

Dharmarāja adopted the ways of Brahmins and Munis and spent his time in the forest free of worries, listening to the Sages narrating the stories of God. Draupadi and Bhīma were arguing that they must wrest the kingdom back from Duryōdhana (*understandable, since they were victimized more than the other Pāṇḍavas by Duryōdhana's plots*). Dharmarāja remained adamant that no action to regain the kingdom would be proper until the terms of exile in the forest and the year incognito were completed.

One day, when Bhīma was out gathering food, a (*articulate*) boa constrictor grabbed him. Bhīma was unable to free himself. Dharmarāja, who went looking for him, struck up a conversation

with the boa. The serpent told Dharmarāja that he would release Bhīma if Dharmarāja answers his questions correctly. Dharmarāja answered the serpent's many philosophical questions starting with "What are the attributes that make one a Brahmin?" and secured the release of Bhīma. Another time, the Pāṇḍavas stopped under a shade tree, thirsty after travelling from one forest to another. Having found a lake nearby, Sahadēva went to fetch some water. When he did not return for quite some time, each of the other brothers went looking and did not return either. Finally, Dharmarāja followed and saw the four of them unconscious on the lake shore. Dharmarāja, who was almost never sad, was overwhelmed by grief at the sight. He was unable to discern the reason for his brothers lying unconscious. He stepped into the lake, intending to slake his thirst. A disembodied voice from the sky (*Ākāṣavāṇi*, in this case a Yaksha, a semi-divine being with special magical powers including invisibility and shape-shifting, who guarded the lake as his own*) said "Do not drink the water without answering my questions correctly". Dharmarāja answered all the questions posed by the Yaksha correctly. The Yaksha offered Dharmarāja one boon. Dharmarāja asked that Nakula be revived. Surprised that Dharmarāja did not seek the revival of Bhīma or Arjuna (*one of the other sons of Kunti*) who have been pillars of strength for the family, and pleased with Dharmarāja's impartial and ethical decision, the Yaksha released all four from their unconscious state.

Once, with the intention of humiliating the Pāṇḍavas during their exile in the forest, Duryōodhana went there with his army. However, the soldiers of a Gandharva captured him before he

reached the Pāṇḍavas. Dharmarāja, learning of the plight of Duryōdhana, sent Bhīma and Arjuna to rescue him, on the basis that even if Duryōdhana was their sworn enemy, he was still their cousin. Duryōdhana was shamed by the magnanimity of Dharmarāja in having him rescued even though his purpose in going to the forest was to taunt the Pāṇḍavas.

The Pāṇḍavas completed their twelve year exile in the forest. They decided to spend the year-long Agjnātavāsa (*incognito*) in the court of King Virāṭa. Dharmarāja disguised himself as a Sanyāsi (*one who renounced all worldly ties*). They bundled their weapons in a sheet (*resembling a corpse*), placed it on a tree and entered Virāṭa's city one by one. King Virāṭa, on first seeing Dharmarāja, wondered why someone who had the looks of a king was a Sanyāsi. The king greeted him with respect. Dharmarāja told Virāṭa his name was Kanku. Dharmarāja became an advisor to the king. In that capacity, Dharmarāja spent his time reading the Purāṇas to the king or entertaining him with play of dice. Whenever he had the chance, he would meet with his brothers and Draupadi secretly. One time, when Kīchaka (*the king's brother-in-law and protector*) attempted to sexually assault her, Draupadi ran into the court and lamented loudly that she was helpless in spite of having five husbands. Bhīma prepared to kill Kīchaka right then and there. To avoid being exposed, Dharmarāja restrained him with a glance and asked him and Draupadi to leave the court.

Duryōdhana attacked Virāṭa's kingdom to steal his cattle. Arjuna (*whose disguise, due to a Ṣāpa by the Apsara* Ūrvaṣi, was as a eunuch named Bṛhannala*), driving the chariot, accompanied Prince Uttara to fight the Kauravas. When he received the news

that the attacking Kaurava army had been beaten into retreat, the king assumed it was his son who achieved the victory and expressed his happiness. As it happened, the year of Agjnātavāsa had ended and the Pāṇḍavas started to reveal themselves. Dharmarāja contradicted the king and stating the victory was due to Bṛhannala, was praising him. Annoyed at having his son being denied credit for the victory, Virāṭa threw dice at Kanku. Drops of blood started falling from his forehead. Draupadi, who was in the court at the time, prevented the drops from falling to the ground, using the end of her sari. The king sent a messenger to bring his son's chariot-driver to the court. Dharmarāja asked the messenger to delay bringing the chariot-driver because he was concerned about what Arjuna might do if he saw the injury the king inflicted. When Arjuna arrived, Dharmarāja did not look up at him or say anything. Even when the five brothers got together and were chatting, he hid his face. Arjuna then asked Dharmarāja why he would not greet him on his return from battle. Dharmarāja finally related the happenings in the court. Arjuna and Bhīma were furious and wanted to kill the king. Dharmarāja pacified them, explaining that Virāṭa did not know who Kanku really was. The four younger brothers shed their disguises and arrived in court. Dharmarāja was sitting on Virāṭa's throne. Virāṭa, astonished at the sight, asked why a Sanyāsi was sitting on his throne. Arjuna revealed Dharmarāja's identity. Extremely happy that the Pāṇḍavas had taken refuge in his kingdom to spend their Agjnātavāsa, the king greeted them with respect. He performed the marriage of his daughter Uttara with Abhimanyu. Lord Kṛshṇa, Balarāma, Sātyaki (*Kṛshṇa's constant companion*), and Drupada all had arrived for

the wedding. After the wedding, they pondered on how the Pāṇḍavas should proceed to try and regain their kingdom. It was decided that they should negotiate peacefully with Duryōdhana. For that purpose, King Drupada's priest was sent as an emissary to meet with Duryōdhana.

Duryōdhana got wind of the fact that Ṣalya (*king of Madra, whose sister was Mādri, King Pāṇḍu's second wife*) was on his way to visit the Pāṇḍavas who were at the time staying at a place called Upaplāvya. Duryōdhana sent his people to meet him on his way and provide hospitality and assistance. He himself met Ṣalya and did much to please him. Ṣalya was so happy at the respect and help the emperor provided him that he readily agreed to be Duryōdhana's ally in the war with Pāṇḍavas that was about to start. Ṣalya then continued his journey and reached the Pāṇḍavas and after inquiring of their wellbeing, he informed Dharmarāja of his promise to be on Duryōdhana's side if war were to occur. Not too upset on hearing this, Dharmarāja said to Ṣalya "It is appropriate that you agreed to help Duryōdhana in return for his assistance to you. All I ask of you is this: Kṛshṇa will drive Arjuna's chariot in the coming war. When Karṇa battles Arjuna, no one will be available to drive Karṇa's chariot but you. Please abuse and annoy Karṇa while you are driving his chariot." Ṣalya agreed to do as Dharmarāja requested.

Sanjaya visited the Pāṇḍavas at the behest of Dhṛtarāshṭra. After inquiring of their wellbeing, he advised Dharmarāja that Dhṛtarāshṭra said it was in the Pāṇḍavas' best interest to achieve peace with the Kauravas. But he did not give any indication of how the Pāṇḍavas might be able to do so. Dharmarāja, whose own

preference was for peace, sent Lord Kṛshṇa as his emissary to negotiate peace with Duryōdhana. Duryōdhana, of course did not agree to give up any part of his empire (*in his own words, not as much territory as it takes to cover the point of a needle*). War was inevitable. The armies of the Pānḍavas and Kauravas arrived at Kurukshētra. To the shocked surprise of his brothers and his enemies, Dharmarāja went on foot to the enemy formation, saluted the elders, Bhīshma, Drōṇa, etc. and obtained their blessings. Once the war started, Dharmarāja was losing confidence that they would win, given the furor with which Bhīshma was leading the Kaurava forces. Kṛshṇa and Arjuna were trying to bolster his courage. Dharmarāja knew that it was impossible to defeat Bhīshma. He, therefore, went to Bhīshma one night (*however fierce the battle was, hostilities were stopped at sunset each day and there would be no violence even if sworn enemies came across one another during the night*) and asked him by what means he could be defeated (*of course Bhīshma could not lie; so he told Dharmarāja the circumstances under which he will disarm himself and be vulnerable*). Following Bhīshma's own advice, he had Ṣikhanḍi *(who was female by birth and had her sex changed by a Siddha [semi-Divine beings with special magical powers]*) sit in the chariot in front of Arjuna. Bhīshma put down his weapons as soon as he saw Ṣikhanḍi. Arjuna kept raining arrows on the unarmed Bhīshma. As an injured Bhīshma lay on a bed of arrows waiting for an auspicious time to die (*he had a boon from his father that death would come only when he decides to die*), Dharmarāja spent much time attending to his needs and learning the art and science of governing and about the moral life from him.

Dharmarāja participated in the fighting on the battlefield. However, he was not as involved as Bhīma and Arjuna were. Also, some warriors would remain off the battlefield and in the Pāṇḍavas' tents to provide security for Dharmarāja (*both sides knew that the war would end in the Kauravas' favour the moment Dharmarāja was killed or captured*).

One day, while Arjuna was fighting in another part of the vast battlefield, the Kauravas aligned in a Padma Vyūha *(Sanskrit, meaning 'Lotus Maze'. Vyūha is an intricate military formation designed to ambush and isolate a feared enemy from his supporting forces. It took specialized knowledge on the part of a warrior to enter and exit such formations, of which the Padma or lotus-shaped formation was a specially difficult one to breach. Arjuna was the only warrior on the Pāṇḍavas' side who had the ability to enter as well as break out of the maze*). Of the remaining warriors, Abhimanyu was the only one who knew how to break into it (see **Subhadra**). Knowing that Abhimanyu did not have the ability to break out of the maze, Dharmarāja assured Abhimanyu that he and other warriors will follow him into the maze, and sent him in. Dharmarāja did his utmost to follow in, but Saindhava (*who chose that day to use a boon he had received from Lord Ṣiva that for one day, he would be able to defeat any of the Pāṇḍavas except Arjuna*) blocked him from entering the maze. Cut off from all help, Abhimanyu was ambushed and killed. Dharmarāja suffered infinite sadness that Arjuna's valiant son was brutally murdered.

Drōṇa (*who was elevated as commander-in-chief following the fall of Bhīshma*) was fighting like a maniac after Duryōdhana

harshly rebuked him for not achieving victory soon enough. Even Kṛshṇa realized that he could not be defeated in honest battle and must be tricked to stop fighting. Well aware that only sorrow for his son's death would make Drōṇa stop fighting, Kṛshṇa then requested Dharmarāja to proclaim that Drōṇa's son Aṣvatthāma had died. Dharmarāja was at first unwilling to utter a lie that Drōṇa's son had died. Kṛshṇa informed him that an elephant named Aṣvatthāma had, in fact, been killed. Dharmarāja then loudly proclaimed that Aṣvatthāma had died, adding under his breath the words "the elephant". Drōṇa, who did not hear "the elephant", was overcome by grief (*certain that it must be true that his son had died, because Dharmarāja, who always spoke truthfully, said so*) and voluntarily disarmed and was killed.

After Drōṇa's death, Karṇa was appointed commander-in-chief. Ṣalya was his chariot-driver. Dharmarāja, tired and defeated in battle, retreated to his tent. Arjuna, informed of his brother's ignominious retreat, came to the tent to check if he was alright. Assuming that Arjuna must have come because he had defeated Karṇa, Dharmarāja praised him effusively. When Arjuna informed him that Karṇa was still alive, Dharmarāja harshly criticized Arjuna for leaving the battlefield. Arjuna, angry that his gesture of goodwill had been misinterpreted, angrily raised his sword to strike his brother. Kṛshṇa, realizing that something like that would happen between tired warriors, pacified the brothers.

Ṣalya followed Karṇa as commander-in-chief. Dharmarāja did most of the fighting against Ṣalya. The two of them engaged in man-to-man fight. At the end, Ṣalya was killed. Some time later, the Pāṇḍavas drew out Duryōdhana who was hiding in a lake and

killed him in a battle with maces. Though the Pāṇḍavas had won, it was a pyrrhic victory as all their relatives and elder statesmen had died in the war.

After it was all over, Dharmarāja visited Dhṛtarāshṭra. Dhṛtarāshṭra blessed him, but Gāndhāri, grieving for her sons, was about to give Dharmarāja a Ṣāpa. Sage Vyāsa (*grandfather to both Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas*) arrived just in time and stopped her, explaining that Dharmarāja was righteous. Dharmarāja and his brothers then went to see Kunti. She was very happy to see her sons (*alive and well after the carnage of war*). She told Dharmarāja to include Karṇa while performing religious rites for the dead relatives, revealing for the first time that he was her son. Extremely unhappy not only that she kept that fact a secret for so long, but also aware that if Karṇa had been on their side, there would have been no war, Dharmarāja proclaimed a Ṣāpa that no woman would henceforth be able to keep a secret.

Even though victorious in war, Dharmarāja did not relish his victory. He was so saddened by having to kill so many relatives, teachers and friends that he wanted to renounce the kingdom and live in the forest. It took earnest persuasion by his brothers, Draupadi, several Sages and Lord Kṛshṇa Himself to bring him back to the city. Kṛshṇa directed Bhīshma (*still lying on a bed of arrows, awaiting the auspicious northward turn of the Sun, called Uttarāyaṇa*) to teach Dharmarāja the ways of Dharma (*the righteous path*). Dharmarāja, for the rest of Bhīshma's life, spent his time learning all the Dharmas from him.

Dhṛtarāshṭra left the city and went to the forest. Dharmarāja, as the new emperor, performed the Aṣvamēdha Yāga*. He did not

rule for long, however. When he learned that Lord Kṛshṇa had terminated His Avatāra, he crowned Abhimanyu's son Parīkshit to the Hastināpura throne and accompanied by Draupadi and his brothers, started a northward journey on foot. A dog joined the party. Along the way, Draupadi fell first; then Sahadēva, Nakula and the rest, with only the dog and Dharmarāja left standing. Then Indra* appeared in a chariot and invited Dharmarāja to come with him to the heavenly abode in the chariot. Dharmarāja told him he will not leave the dog that so faithfully followed him since it would be a sin to do so. Dharma (*another name for Yama*), who had taken the form of the dog, appeared in his true form and applauded Dharmarāja for his sense of fairness. Dharmarāja was taken to Indra Lōka (*Swarga, the heavenly abode of the Dēvas*) where he saw Duryōdhana. But he did not find his brothers or Draupadi. When he expressed a desire to see these others, Indra sent Sage Nārada with him. Nārada took him to Naraka (*Purgatory*), where he saw Karṇa and the rest. Sages explained to him that a king necessarily performs both Puṇya* and Pāpa (*sin*) and has to spend some time in Hell before entering Heaven. Dharmarāja was saddened to see that Duryōdhana was enjoying Heaven's bliss while his brothers were suffering in Hell. The Sages comforted him, explaining that those who endure hardship at first get to be happy in the long run. They then asked him to bathe in the heavenly river Ganga. He thereby became a Dēva. He was taken back to Indra Lōka where he saw Karṇa, Bhīma, Arjuna and other relatives. *Mahā Bhārata*

Dharmasāvarṇi – A Manu*, son of Manu named Dakshasāvarṇi. His son was Vishnusāvarṇi. *Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa*

Dharmavrata I – Daughter of Manu* named Dharma. Wife of Marīchi (*mind-born son of Lord Brahma*). Once, while her husband slept, she was massaging his feet. Brahma arrived at their place while Marīchi was still asleep. She was in a quandary. It was her duty as the hostess and the daughter-in-law to greet and welcome Brahma but it would be a sin to stop massaging her husband's tired feet. After thinking long and hard, she decided to greet her father-in-law, and stopped massaging her husband's feet. Marīchi then woke up, and annoyed that his wife stopped massaging his feet and was tending to another, gave her a Ṣāpa* that she would become a stone. Furious at being given a Ṣāpa unfairly, she countered with a Ṣāpa of her own that Marīchi shall be incinerated by the third eye of Lord Ṣiva.

Husband and wife both started to perform Tapas* as a means to obtain relief from the Ṣāpa each gave the other (*the power of a Ṣāpa, due to the spiritual power behind it, is such that it cannot be revoked. At best, the effects can be softened or a trigger for release from it arranged*). Dharmavrata was performing Tapas while sitting in the middle of a roaring fire. Brahma, beseeched by the Dēvas to make her stop her Tapas, appeared to Dharmavrata and conveyed the Dēvas' request. He also added an incentive, that the stone she would turn into will have the power that anyone who touches it or performs certain kinds of Yāga, or religious rites for their ancestors near it, will attain Mukti* along with their ancestors. She then became a stone named Dēvarūpiṇi. That was the stone that Lord Brahma once placed on the head of an Asura* named Gaya. *Vāyu Purāṇa*

Dharmavrata II – A Muni who lived in the Danḍaka (*covers*

parts of Chattisghar, Odisha, and Andhra Pradesh states) forest. He related the story of the lake named Panchāpsarasa (*Sanskrit for 'five divine nymphs'*) to Rāma. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Dharmavyādha – A tribal man residing in the town of Mithila. He was engaged in his traditional profession of hunting and making a living selling the meat of the animals. He led a righteous life and was well versed in Dharma (*law or justice*). A Brahmin named Kauṣika used to come to him to learn aspects of Dharma from him and learnt much about the science of life and nonviolence.

Dharmavyādha had a son named Arjuna (*different from the middle Pāṇḍava*) and a daughter named Arjunaki. He gave his daughter in marriage to Prasanna, son of a Muni named Matanga. After teaching his daughter principles to live by, he sent her to her inlaws' house. One day her mother-in-law harshly criticized her for being the daughter of a man who kills animals and eats their meat. Arjunaki became angry and went back to her father's house, and related to him her mother-in-law's abusive words. Dharmavyādha took his daughter back to her inlaws' place. He told his daughter's mother-in-law that he would eat a meal at their house and asked what is on the menu. She mentioned several grains and pulses she planned to cook and serve him. He asked to see them and when she put them in a pan and showed them, he cried out "I will not eat in your house. Why do you kill so many living things each day for food? I kill and eat only one animal each week." As he was about to leave in a huff, Matanga apologised to him and begged him to stay. He explained that it was wrong on their part to blame his daughter for his profession.

Dharmavyādha was a Brahmin in his previous life. He had learnt

archery and used to go on hunting trips with his friends who were princes. On one of those trips, he shot an arrow at what he thought was an animal and hit a Muni instead. The Muni gave him a Ṣāpa*, saying "Since you have been acting like someone from a low caste even though you are a Brahmin, you will be born as a seller of meat." He was born as a hunter due to the Ṣāpa (see **Vasu**). *Varāha Purāṇa; Mahā Bhārata*

Dhāta – Brother of Vidhāta. He married Āyati, one of the daughters of Mēru mountain (*in the Purāṇas, mountains are anthropomorphed into men*). He had a son named Prāṇa. *Brahmānḍa Purāṇa*

Dhātaki – Son of Pavana, the king of an island named Pushkara. The island was also known as Dhātaki Khanḍa after him. *Brahmānḍa Purāṇa*

Dhātrēyika – Draupadi's maid when she was in the Kāmyaka forest. She was the one who informed Bhīma and Arjuna of Saindhava's attack on Draupadi. *Mahā Bhārata*

Dhaumya – A Brahmin. A Gandharva* named Angāraparṇa advised the Pānḍavas to request him to be their priest. He agreed and remained their priest even during their exile in the forest. *Mahā Bhārata*

Dhavaḷānga – A Muni. He taught Kaikēyi (*Lord Rāma's aunt, His father's favourite wife*) ways to counter and avenge the acts of black magic employed by Asuras. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Dhēnuka – An Asura*. He lived in the forest in the form of a donkey and was killing and eating people. Balarāma (*Lord*

Kṛshṇa's older brother) killed him. *Bhāgavata*

Dhēnumati – Wife of Dēvadyumna. *Bhāgavata*

Dhīmanta – Son of Purūrava and the Apsara* Ūrvaṣi. *Bhāgavata*

Dhishaṇa – Wife of Havirdhāna. *Matsya Purāṇa*

Dhṛshṭa – Son of Vaivasvata Manu* (*Manu of the current, seventh Manvantara*). *Bhāgavata*

Dhṛshṭadyumna – Son of Drupada. Drupada, smarting from the humiliation engineered by Drōṇa, performed a Yāga for the purpose of having a son who could kill Drōṇa. Dhṛshṭadyumna and Draupadi emerged from the holy fire of the Yāga. He was valiant. He was specially skilled in the creation of Vyūha (*Vyūha or maze is an intricate military formation designed to ambush and isolate a feared enemy from his supporting forces. It took specialized knowledge on the part of a warrior to enter and exit such formations*). He was thus in charge of countering the Kaurava forces' Vyūha by encircling and neutralizing them with his own formations. He fought fiercely in the war and was responsible for the deaths of many Kaurava warriors. Ultimately however, he did not get to kill Drōṇa (*which was the purpose for which he was created during Drupada's Yāga*). He only cut Drōṇa's head off after he was killed. There was no particular reason for this unnecessary and crude act. This did anger Drōṇa's son Aṣvatthāma who, after the war ended, entered the tents of the Pānḍavas and killed Dhṛshṭadyumna while he was asleep. Dhṛshṭadyumna's son was Dhṛtakētu. *Mahā Bhārata*

Dhṛshṭakētu I – King of the Chēdi kingdom. Son of Ṣiṣupāla. He

was an ally of the Pāṇḍavas. He led a battalion of the Pāṇḍava army. He was killed in the Mahā Bhārata war. *Mahā Bhārata*

Dhṛshṭakētu II – Son of Dhṛshṭadyumna. *Mahā Bhārata*

Dhṛtarāshṭra I – Kshētraja* son of Vichitravīrya. In a previous life he was a Gandharva* king named Hamsa, son of Arishṭa. Vichitrvīrya had died before he had any children (see **Ambika**). To keep the Kuru dynasty from ending, his mother Satyavati directed one of his widows, Ambika, to conceive a son by Sage Vyāsa, who was another son of Satyavati. Ambika, seeing the Sage in bed, was repelled by his appearance and kept her eyes closed during intercourse. As a result, the congenitally blind Dhṛtarāshṭra was born to her. Protected and mentored by Bhīshma, he grew up, and after his Upanayanam*, learnt the princely arts (*including law and politics*). Bhīshma (*in accordance with his renunciation of the throne and his promise to his and Vichitravīrya's father Ṣantanu to protect the reputation and honour of the family*) installed Dhṛtarāshṭra on the throne but personally oversaw the peace and security of the kingdom. Dhṛtarāshṭra's half-brother Pāṇḍu (*Kshētraja son of Vichitravīrya's other widow Ambālika, also by Sage Vyāsa*) was also very helpful in matters of state.

Dhṛtarāshṭra married King Subala's daughter Gāndhāri, as well as her sisters Satyavrata, Satyasēna, Sudhēshṇa, Samhita, Tējaṣṣrava, Suṣrava, Vikṛti, Ṣubha, Sambhava, and Daṣārṇa and one hundred other princesses. He had a hundred sons including Duryōdhana and Duṣṣāsana and one daughter Dussala, by Gāndhāri.

After the death of King Pāṇḍu, the Pāṇḍavas grew up in the capital of the empire, Hastināpura. Dhṛtarāshṭra, at least initially,

treated them with the same love and affection as he did his own sons. On the advice of Bhīshma that Dharmarāja, the eldest of the Pāṇḍavas, was the embodiment of ethics and morality, Dhṛtarāshṭra elevated him to the position of crown prince. Duryōdhana, intensely jealous, went to his father and complained that Dharmarāja and his descendants will rule in Hastināpura forever, that Dhṛtarāshṭra's own sons will starve, and that it is unfair and improper of Dhṛtarāshṭra to treat his own sons this way. He asked that the Pāṇḍavas be exiled from the city. Duryōdhana was constantly plotting to harm the Pāṇḍavas. Dhṛtarāshṭra, even though aware that it is unjust to cast away his brother's children (*even though Pāṇḍu was younger than Dhṛtarāshṭra, Dharmarāja was older than Duryōdhana; much of the empire was won by Pāṇḍu*), he finally allowed his love for his children to overcome his sense of justice and succumbed to his oldest son's entreaties. He told Dharmarāja and his brothers "Go to Vāraṇāsi (*present-day Benares*) and come back after giving donations of gold and cows in your late father's name", and sent them away.

Dhṛtarāshṭra was informed that the Pāṇḍavas had perished on their journey. He was extremely saddened by the news. He cried openly and loudly in the Sabha (*court*). He performed the religious rites of their funerals. Sometime later, he was informed that the Pāṇḍavas were alive and, after marrying Draupadi, were safe and sound in the city of King Drupada. This did not make Dhṛtarāshṭra happy. Duryōdhana and his close friend Karṇa had been drilling into him the idea that the best course of action was to kill the Pāṇḍavas. They were criticizing Vidura (*Sage Vyāsa's other son by the servant maid whom Ambālika sent in her place*) for being

partial to the Pāṇḍavas. Dhṛtarāshṭra's attitude had changed, due to this constant brain-washing. He asked Bhīshma and the other elders for ideas on how to kill the Pāṇḍavas. Bhīshma and Drōṇa remonstrated that it is immoral and criminal to take such action. Vidura tried to frighten his brother, telling him that if hostilities were undertaken against the Pāṇḍavas, they would take away the empire with their moral and physical might. Dhṛtarāshṭra finally decided to give the Pāṇḍavas half the realm and sent Vidura to invite them to Hastināpura. The Pāṇḍavas arrived and treated their uncle with respect and devotion. Dhṛtarāshṭra assigned the region known as Khāṇḍavaprastha and directed them to build a city there.

Dharmarāja had the city of Indraprastha built and performed the Rājasūya Yāga*. Dhṛtarāshṭra was pleased. However Duryōdhana was envious. Ṣakuni (*Duryōdhana's maternal uncle*) suggested that he could take away the wealth of the Pāṇḍavas and give it to Duryōdhana in a rigged game of chance. Duryōdhana and his allies persuaded Dhṛtarāshṭra to agree to this course of action as it would be much easier than retrieving the Pāṇḍavas' share of the empire in a war. Dhṛtarāshṭra secretly informed Vidura of his son's plan. Vidura tried to dissuade Dhṛtarāshṭra. Dhṛtarāshṭra maintained that no harm would occur by mere gambling, but Vidura would not agree. Dhṛtarāshṭra then tried to convince his son to abandon the idea of rigged games of chance by offering him much wealth (*demonstrating his extreme naivete. Duryōdhana already considered everything, including the portion of the empire given to the Pāṇḍavas by his father, to be his by right*). Duryōdhana, of course rejected the offer. Finally deciding to respect his son's wishes, while aware of the danger of making enemies out of the

Pāṇḍavas, he summoned Vidura and said to him "Vidura! Go and bring the Pāṇḍavas here. I want to show them our Sabha (*court*), encrusted with diamonds. That will make me happy. While they are here, we might enjoy some fair gambling to pass the time." (*It was obvious to Vidura that there would be nothing fair about the gambling; by the standards of the day, he could not disobey his older brother and king.*) Dharmarāja and his brothers arrived and greeted Dhṛtarāshṭra with respect. While they were conversing with him, Duryōdhana invited Dharmarāja to games of chance. The Pāṇḍavas lost everything in the rigged game, their kingdom, their freedom and even Draupadi. Duryōdhana had Draupadi dragged into the court and Duṣṣāsana proceeded to humiliate her by trying to remove her clothes. Even with all this going on, Dhṛtarāshṭra did not intervene and try to restrain his sons. Both Vidura and Gāndhāri told him that Duryōdhana's actions were immoral. At that point, Dhṛtarāshṭra apologised to Draupadi for the dreadful behaviour of his sons and as boons for her, restored their freedom and returned the kingdom.

Dharmarāja could not leave well enough alone but gambled again, lost everything and started the exile in the forest. Dhṛtarāshṭra expressed some regret at the plight of the Pāṇḍavas in their exile. Vidura responded bluntly "Why feel sad? Just call them back and return their kingdom to them." Another day, Vidura said to him "You allowed the rigged games of chance by which the righteous and mighty Pāṇḍavas were exiled to the forest. Do you think there will be no consequences to antagonizing them?" Dhṛtarāshṭra was angered by these words and said "You could not abide to see my sons' wealth. Go away and stay where you are

comfortable." Vidura left the city and joined the Pāṇḍavas in the forest. Dhṛtarāshṭra did not like Vidura associating with the Pāṇḍavas and summoned him back to the city. Duryōdhana planned to attack the Pāṇḍavas who were living in the forest like Munis. Sage Vyāsa visited Dhṛtarāshṭra about that time and cautioned him that his son's efforts are immoral. Dhṛtarāshṭra pleaded with Vyāsa that everything that had happened was his son's fault. However, he had no control over Duryōdhana, and asked Vyāsa to punish his son. Some time later, a Muni named Maitrēya visited Dhṛtarāshṭra after visiting the Pāṇḍavas. Dhṛtarāshṭra enquired after the well-being of the Pāṇḍavas and sought reassurance that they would abide by the terms of their exile. Dhṛtarāshṭra was extremely concerned that the Pāṇḍavas will go to war with his son's forces and dispossess him of his kingdom. He frequently sought to learn how the Pāṇḍavas were doing and tried to dissuade Duryōdhana when he wanted to go visit and taunt the Pāṇḍavas in the forest. It was not because he thought Duryōdhana might harm them. His concern was actually for what they might do to his son.

When Duryōdhana and his allies staged the attack on Virāṭa's herds of cattle with the hope of exposing the Pāṇḍavas before the end of their incognito time, it does not appear that Dhṛtarāshṭra was consulted. However, it is unlikely that he had no inkling of it. After successful completion of the incognito period, the Pāṇḍavas sent King Drupada's priest as an emissary to negotiate return of their kingdom. About the same time, Dhṛtarāshṭra sent his trusted aide Sanjaya to meet with Dharmarāja with advice that making peace is in everyone's interest but gave no indication of how a

peaceful settlement might be achieved. Duryōdhana had announced that he was not willing to cede anything to the Pāṇḍavas. Bhīshma, Vyāsa and the other elders were advising Duryōdhana that Kṛshṇa and Arjuna were extraordinary people and that it is best not to make them enemies. Dhṛtarāshṭra was also advising his son to make peace with the Pāṇḍavas due to fear of their prowess, not due to any affection for them. He did not forcefully oppose his son's decision to deny the Pāṇḍavas any share of the empire. The quest for peace by the Pāṇḍavas did not succeed even though Lord Kṛshṇa Himself tried to negotiate with Duryōdhana. Unable to either give a favourable response to Kṛshṇa or to oppose his son's intransigence, he sent Vidura to bring Gāndhāri to the court, hoping she could deter Duryōdhana from the wrong path.

War was finally declared. The rival armies were massed on the battlefield. Sage Vyāsa came to try and convince the Kauravas to give the Pāṇḍavas their share of the empire and make peace. Dhṛtarāshṭra sadly admitted that his son would not listen to him. He sought a means of being kept abreast of the course of fighting on the field. Sage Vyāsa provided to Sanjaya the ability to roam the battlefield without being seen by anyone or hurt by any weapons. Dhṛtarāshṭra was kept informed of all events on the field, of the entire 18 days long war, by Sanjaya. As each one near and dear to him fell, Dhṛtarāshṭra's grief knew no bounds. After the war ended, the Pāṇḍavas visited Dhṛtarāshṭra. He was embracing each of them and giving them his blessing. When it was Bhīma's turn to be embraced, Kṛshṇa pulled him aside and put in his place an iron statue made in Bhīma's image. Dhṛtarāshṭra, pretending affection,

hugged the iron statue so hard that it shattered into pieces. Such was Dhṛtarāshṭra's strength and his anger at Bhīma for killing his eldest son by hitting him on the thigh. Afterwards, unable to stay in the city (*especially since the ruler now was Dharmarāja*), he went to Tapōvana*.

He stayed in the Āṣram of a royal Sage named Ṣatayūpa. While he was there, Sage Vyāsa visited him. Dhṛtarāshṭra expressed a desire to see the dead members of his family. Vyāsa took him to the holy river Ganga and after Dhṛtarāshṭra bathed in the river, Sage Vyāsa gave him Divya Dṛshṭi* so that he could see the dead. Dhṛtarāshṭra returned to the Āṣram after seeing the departed loved ones. One day, while he was performing Tapas*, a great fire broke out. Dhṛtarāshṭra forced Sanjaya to leave and sat in a state of Yōga. The fire comsumed his body and his soul went to Indra* Lōka (*Indra's world; Swarga*). *Mahā Bhārata*

Dhṛtarāshṭra II – Son of Kadruva. A Nāga*. When Babhruvāhana (*Son of Arjuna by his Nāga wife Ulūchi; each of the Pānḍavas had at least one wife he did not share with his brothers, in addition to Draupadi, shared by all five*) needed Mṛtasanjīvani (*which has the power to bring the dead back to life*) to revive Arjuna, he went to Nāga Lōka, but the Nāgas refused to give it to him. Babhruvāhana battled and defeated Dhṛtarāshṭra. Then Dhṛtarāshṭra gave him the Mṛtasanjīvani. *Jaimini Bhārata*

Dhṛtarāshṭri – A (*articulate*) female bird born to Kaṣyapa Prajāpati* and Tāmra. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Dhṛtavarma – Younger brother of Kētuvarma. *Mahā Bhārata*

Dhṛtavrata – Son of Dhṛti of the dynasty of Pūru. *Bhāgavata*

Dhṛti – Daughter of Dharaṇi and Daksha Prajāpati*. *Mahā Bhārata*

Dhruva I – One of the eight Vasus. Son of Prajāpati and his wife Brahmavidya, daughter of a Manu* named Dēva. His son was Kāla. *Mahā Bhārata*

Dhruva II – Son of Nahusha. *Mahā Bhārata*

Dhruva III – Son of Uttānapāda and Sunīti (*also known as Sūnṛta*). His step-mother was Suruchi. Once, when he was a child, he sat on his father's lap. His step-mother scolded him saying "You are not eligible to sit where my son should sit. You cannot be fortunate enough to deserve sitting there since you were not born to me." Dhruva, upset by her abusive words, got off his father's lap and with his mother's permission went to the forest to perform Tapas*. Encountering Sage Nārada on his way, he followed the Sage's advice and performed intense Tapas directed towards Lord Vishṇu. In the forest, he saw the Saptarshis* who taught him Mantras to use in his Tapas. Lord Vishṇu appeared to him and granted him many boons. His father heard news of his son coming home after obtaining boons from Vishṇu and was extremely happy. Uttānapāda crowned Dhruva king, and left to follow the Yōga way. Dhruva's younger brother Uttama, who was unmarried, went on a hunt in the Himālaya mountain region and was killed there by Yakshas (*semi-divine beings with special magical powers*). In retaliation for his brother's murder, Dhruva went on a rampage in the city of Kubēra (*the God of wealth and also king of Yakshas*) and was killing Yakshas. Kubēra himself came and negotiated a peace agreement with Dhruva. Dhruva ruled for 26,000 years. He

and his wife Dhanya had a son named Ṣishṭa. He had sons named Kalpa and Vatsara by Bhrami, daughter of Ṣimṣumāra; a son named Utkala by Ila, daughter of Vāyu (*the Wind God*); and sons named Bhavya and Ṣlishṭi by his wife Ṣambhu.

Dhruva was a Brahmin in his previous life. He performed many good works and was a devotee of God. He became friends with a king and felt the desire to become a king himself. He was rewarded for his righteous life with re-incarnation as a Kshatriya and became a king. *Bhāgavata; Matsya Purāṇa; Vishṇu Purāṇa; Hari Vamṣa*

Dhruvasandhi I – Son of Pushya and father of Sudarṣana. *Bhāgavata*

Dhruvasandhi II – (*Also known as Dhruvasindhu*) He was the king of Kōsala. He had wives named Manōrama and Līlāvati. He had a son named Sudarṣana by Manōrama and a son named Ṣatrujit by Līlāvati. He once went on a hunt and was killed by a lion. Ṣatrujit, even though he was the younger son, was crowned king after him. The half-brothers' maternal grandfathers went to war against each other for this reason. *Dēvī Bhāgavata*

Dhruvasēna – Wife of Sumati. (*Son of King Bharata, after whom India came to be known as Bhārat*). *Bhāgavata*

Dhūmra I – Wife of Mārkanḍēya and mother of Vēdaṣira. *Brahmānḍa Purāṇa; Mārkanḍēya Purāṇa*

Dhūmra II – Wife of Prajāpati, daughter-in-law of Dēva. She had a son named Dhara. *Mahā Bhārata*

Dhūmrakēṣa – One of the sons of Pṛthu. *Bhāgavata*

Dhūmrāksha I – Son of Sumāli. He fought the Vānara* Hanumān

after the death of Prahasta and was killed in battle. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Dhūmrāksha II – Son of Hēmachandra, of the dynasty of Tṛṇabindu. His son was Sahadēva (*not one of the Pānḍavas*). *Bhāgavata*

Dhūmrakētu I – Son of Tṛṇabindu. *Bhāgavata*

Dhūmrakētu II – One of the sons of Bharata (*the king from whom India got the name Bhārat*). *Bhāgavata*

Dhūmralōchana – Commander of the armies of Ṣumbhu and Niṣumbhu. *Mārkanḍēya Purāṇa*

Dhūmrāṣva I – Father of Nala, who was a friend of Sudēva. *Mārkanḍēya Purāṇa*

Dhūmrāṣva II – Son of Suchandra and grandson of Hēmachandra. His son was Sṛnjaya. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Dhundhu – An Asura*. Son of Madhu. He performed Tapas* and obtained boons from Lord Brahma. He built an underground residence near the Āṣram of Sage Uttanka and was sleeping there. The breath he exhaled filled the sky with fire and smoke. The forests and mountains in the vicinity were shaking and became unfit for habitation. Uttanka went to King Bṛhadaṣva and requested him to kill the Asura. The king's son Kuvalāṣva killed him. *Bhāgavata*

Dhundhumāra I – Son of King Bṛhadaṣva. He was named Kuvalāṣva and acquired the name Dhundhumāra by killing an Asura* named Dhundhu. Dhundhu was harassing Sage Uttanka by staying near the Sage's Āṣram and creating distractions to his Tapas*. The Sage approached Bṛhadaṣva and requested him to kill

the Asura. Bṛhadaṣva, at the time, was preparing to give his kingdom to his sons and retire to Tapōvana*. Unwilling to take up arms again at that time, he assigned the task of killing the Asura to his sons. Dhundhumāra and his brothers, accompanied by Uttanka, set out to kill the Asura.

Dhundhumāra's sons dug a hole where they saw smoke rising. When the Asura (*who was underground*) yawned, the flames from his breath burned to death all but three of the princes. The three survivors were Dhṛḍhāṣva, Kapilāṣva, and Bhadrāṣva.

Finally Dhundhumāra killed the Asura by deploying the powerful weapon, Brahmāstra. Indra* and other Dēvas appeared and asked him to request boons. He asked for proximity to Lord Vishṇu, a charitable nature, and devotion to Brahmins. In addition to those boons, the Dēvas also brought his dead sons back to life. *Bhāgavata*

Dhundhumāra II – A king of the Hayahaya dynasty. Once, while hunting, he accidentally killed the son of a Muni, mistaking the boy for an animal. When he approached the kill and realized he had killed a boy, he was extremely sad. He went home and related the sad event to his retinue. They took him to the Āṣram of a Muni named Tārksha and describing how Dhundhumāra happened to kill a boy, asked the Muni for a means by which the king could be absolved from the sin he had unknowingly committed. Tārksha, claiming that death could not have occurred in or near his Āṣram, called out to his son. When the boy came, Dhundhumāra exclaimed "That was the boy I killed. How is he still alive?" The Muni replied that the boy was invulnerable because of his moral nature. *Mahā Bhārata*

Dhuryachitta – A king of Yayāti's lineage. He was also known by the name Marut. He adopted Dushyanta and raised him. *Mahā Bhārata*

Dhūtapāpa – A river. One of five holy rivers known as Panchanada. Once while a Muni named Vēdaṣira was performing Tapas*, he saw an Apsara* and spontaneously ejaculated. A girl was born from his semen. Vēdaṣira named her Dhūtapāpa. The girl, with her father's permission, performed Tapas. Lord Brahma appeared before her and asked her to choose a boon. She wished to be purer and holier than all other things. Brahma granted that she will be the holiest of all Tīrthas*. Some time later, a man named Dharma saw her, fell in love with her and expressed his desire to her. She told him she did not have the freedom to decide whom she will marry and suggested he should talk to her father. Dharma refused to do as she suggested and tried to force her to become his wife in a Gāndharva* marriage. She gave Dharma a Ṣāpa* that he shall become a river (*contrary to the general anthropomorphism of rivers as female*). He in turn gave her a Ṣāpa that she shall become a stone. Dhūtapāpa related what happened to her father. He said "Dharma's Ṣāpa cannot be rescinded. You will become a stone called Chandrakānta and when moonrise occurs, you will become a river. Then Dharma will be your husband." (*Kāṣi Khanḍa is a 'Sthala Purāṇa'**.) *Kāṣi Khanḍa*

Dikkanyas – Once, while Lord Brahma was contemplating creation, the Dik (*directions*), e.g., Pūrva (*east*), Uttara (*north*), Dakshiṇa (*south*) and Paṣchima (*west*) emerged from his ear in the form of women. They asked Brahma to show them appropriate places where they can stand. He told them, "the world is vast.

Stand where you please. I will send your husbands wherever you choose to be." They went on their way. The places where they stayed got names from them, i.e., Pūrva Dik, Uttara Dik, etc. Brahma then sent Dikpatis (*Lords of the directions or segments*) to the different directions. *Brahma Purāṇa*

Dilīpa – A king of the Ikshvāku dynasty. He had no children for a long time. He went to the Āṣram of Sage Vasishṭha and was of service to him. The Sage (*pleased with the king's service*), realizing with his Divya Dṛshṭi* that the Kāmadhēnu (*a holy cow which had the power to grant any wish such as the king's wish for children*) was in Pātāḷa (*the netherworld*) due to a Ṣāpa*, advised the king to worship her offspring, Nandini, which was in his Āṣram. King Dilīpa and his queen were constantly looking after the cow Nandini with devotion. One day, Nandini, while grazing in Himālaya mountain region, entered a cave. Dilīpa, also entering the cave and seeing a lion pouncing on Nandini, moved to aim an arrow at the lion. His arm suddenly became paralyzed. The lion, speaking in a human voice, said, "I will kill the cow because it is food for me." Realizing that he was powerless to kill the lion, Dilīpa said, "Take me for your meal, and let the Sage's sacred cow live." Nandini, propitiated by the king's devotion, told him that the entire scenario was an artifact created by her and gave him the boons he desired. A son, Raghu (*ancestor of Lord Rāma*), was born to him. While Dilīpa was performing his one hundredth Yāga, Indra* stole his sacrificial horse.

Because Dilīpa had assisted the Dēvas in war, they offered him a boon. He asked them how long he had to live. They told him he had only two hours. He returned to earth, renounced all worldly

pleasures and by the power of Yōga, attained his place in the abode of Lord Vishṇu. Dilīpa was also known as Khaṭvānga. *Raghu Vamṣa*

Dīrghabāhu I – A king. He was well learned but vain and arrogant. He used to abuse Brahmins. Upset by his abuse, some Brahmins gave him a Ṣāpa* that he would become a tiger. Worried and remorseful, he begged them to tell him how long he had to live as a tiger. They told him, "After becoming a tiger, you will pounce on a Brahmin to eat him. The Brahmin, terrified at the sight of you, will chant the name of Nārāyaṇa (*one of the names of Lord Vishṇu*). At that very instant, a hunter will kill you. When you hear the name of Nārāyaṇa, you will be released from our Ṣāpa." The king became a tiger and after a while, he attacked a Muni named Aruṇi. The scared Muni kept repeating "Nārāyaṇa, Nārāyaṇa, Nārāyaṇa" and tried to run away. A hunter saw and killed the tiger. The king was relieved of the Ṣāpa. *Varāha Purāṇa*

Dīrghadarṣi – A (*articulate*) fish. Three articulate fish, Dīrghadarṣi (*means farsighted in Sanskrit*), Prāptakālagjna (*which means 'knows what to do for the occasion'*), and Dīrghasūtra all lived in a pond. Dīrghadarṣi told the other two that since summer was approaching, they must leave that pond before the water level goes down due to evaporation and fishermen would come to catch them along with other fish. Prāptakālagjna dismissed Dīrghadarṣi's warning saying, "Why worry now about what might happen in the future? We can do something when the time is right." Dīrghadarṣi left that pond and took shelter in another (*probably deeper*) body of water. The other two remained in that pond. Summer arrived and fishermen came and put fishing lines with hooks in the pond.

Prāptakālagjna avoided the hook and bit on the line. Dīrghasūtra, not knowing what to do, did nothing and just waited and was caught on a hook. As the hooked fish were being pulled out of the water, Prāptakālagjna let go of the line and escaped. *Mahā Bhārata*

Dīrghasūtra – A (*articulate*) fish. (See **Dīrghadarṣi**) Lacking foresight or the ability to adapt to circumstances, was caught and killed by fishermen. *Mahā Bhārata*

Dīrghatamas – Son of Utathya. His mother was named Mamata. While his mother was pregnant with him, his paternal uncle Bṛhaspati (*Guru of the Dēvas*) raped her. Dīrghatamas, still in the womb, reacted angrily to Bṛhaspati. Angry that a mere fetus would dare to criticize him, Bṛhaspati gave him a Ṣāpa* that he would be a Dīrghatamas (*means 'in the dark for a long time' in Sanskrit, or blind*). The child was congenitally blind and was given the name Dīrghatamas. Even thus handicapped, Dīrghatamas became a very learned man.

Dīrghatamas married a woman named Pradvēshiṇi and fathered five children, one of whom was Gautama. His wife was always mad at him. Fed up with her attitude, he asked her one day, "Why are you always angry with me, even though you are my wife and the mother of my children?" She angrily replied, "You are my Bharta (*meaning one who takes care, or husband*), and I am your Bhārya (*meaning one who is taken care of, or wife*), but I have had to take care of you and I am tired of you. Go away!" Furious on hearing his wife's intemperate words, Dīrghatamas gave women a Ṣāpa that a woman without a husband shall not be allowed to wear ornaments, especially the Māngalya (*the sacred necklace tied by*

the husband around a woman's neck during the wedding ceremony). As the quarrel escalated, Pradvēshiṇi asked her sons to take their father somewhere and dump him. They took their blind father away and dropped him in the river Ganga. Dīrghatamas chanted Vedic hymns as the stream carried him along. A king named Bali (*different from Prahlada's grandson*), bathing in the river, rescued him and took him to his palace. Realizing that Dīrghatamas is a learned Sage, the childless king requested him to impregnate his wife Sudhēshṇa with Kshētraja* sons and sent her to Dīrghatamas. The queen was repelled by the appearance of the blind Sage and sent her maidservant to his bed in her place. The maidservant had several children by the Sage. Bali assumed they were born to his queen and raised them as his children. Dīrghatamas revealed the truth to the king that the children were born not to queen Sudhēshṇa but to her servant. The king requested Dīrghatamas again to beget children by his queen and persuaded her to sleep with the Sage. Five sons were born to Sudhēshṇa and Dīrghatamas and they were named Anga, Vanga, Kaḷinga, Puṇḍra, and Ṣunga. They founded five Kingdoms which were named after them. They correspond roughly to present-day Bhagalpur, Bengal, Andhra, Rājasāhi and Tāmravika. *Mahā Bhārata*

Dīrghatapa – Son of Rāshṭra. His son was Dhanvantari, who was very learned in the art and science of the system of medicine called Āyurvēda (*literally 'knowledge of life'*). *Bhāgavata*

Dīrghāyu – Son of Ayutāyu. He fought against Arjuna after Arjuna defeated his father. He was defeated as well. *Mahā Bhārata*

Dishaṇa – Wife of Havirdhāna. Their sons include Prāchīnabarhi and Ṣukla. *Brahmānḍa Purāṇa*

Dishṭa – Younger brother of Ikshvāku. *Dēvī Bhāgavata*

Dishyanta – Younger brother of Dushyanta. *Mahā Bhārata*

Diti – Daughter of Dharaṇi and Daksha Prajāpati*. Wife of Sage Kaṣyapa, whose other wives included Aditi, Vinata and Kadruva. She gave birth to many sons who were all cruel and evil. Her sexual desires were excessive. She used to force herself on her husband before nightfall, ignoring his admonitions that it was improper. Her husband gave her a Ṣāpa* that her sons would be killed by Lord Vishṇu as they were committing acts of evil and hurting innocent people. Terrible Asuras* including Bhadra, Hiraṇyāksha, and Hiraṇyakaṣipu were all her sons. Indra* killed many of her sons, so she tried to propitiate her husband hoping to bear a son who would be capable of killing Indra. Pleased with her efforts, Kaṣyapa offered her a boon. She asked for a son powerful enough to defeat Indra. Even though her request saddened him, he agreed to grant her wish (*those with the spiritual power to grant boons felt that once they offer to give a boon, they cannot violate their promise regardless of the nature of the wish*). Indra learnt of the granting of this boon and also that Diti was pregnant again. Terrified at the prospect of the birth of a powerful enemy, Indra planned to prevent the event. Shape-shifting to a young boy, he approached Diti and offered to be her servant and perform any chores with which she needed his help. She came to trust her boy servant implicitly. One day, he found her sleeping in the middle of the day. Indra entered her womb and cut the fetus up into seven

pieces. Each of the pieces started to cry. Indra further cut each of the seven pieces into seven pieces. Hearing the cries from her womb, Diti woke up and cried, "Do not kill my unborn babies!" Indra then showed himself and apologised for his actions but asserted that any available means can be used to kill one's enemy. Diti turned her sons from that pregnancy over to Indra himself and asked him to take care of them. These became Dēvas and were named Maruts. *Brahma Purāṇa*

Diviratha I – Son of Dadhivāhana. *Mahā Bhārata*

Diviratha II – Son of Bhumanyu. *Mahā Bhārata*

Divōdās I – King of Kāṣi*. A Brahmin who lived in Kāṣi, named Aunikumbha, approached the king and told him to build a temple to Lord Ṣiva in Kāṣi and that Ṣiva appeared to him in a dream and told him that He wished to live there. Divōdās built the temple as the Brahmin had advised and was worshipping Lord Ṣiva every day. Ṣiva was giving every devotee what they wished for but in spite of Divōdās' great devotion and desire for a son, did not bless him. Angered by Ṣiva's neglect, Divōdās had the temple razed to the ground. The city's Brahmins were upset by the sin committed by Divōdās. Aunikumbha issued a Ṣāpa* that Kāṣi would be depopulated. *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*

Divōdās was originally named Ripunjaya. Due to a drought that lasted sixty years, all the people of Kāṣi, including the king, had died. Lord Brahma then approached Ripunjaya and said, "Become a king and live in the city of Kāṣi. You will be known there as Divōdās." (*Kāṣi Khaṇḍa is a 'Sthala Purāṇa'**.) *Kāṣi Khaṇḍa*

Divōdās II – Son of Sudēva, the king of Kāṣi*. A Hayahaya king

named Vītahavya, killed Sudēva and came to fight Divōdās. Divōdās fled from the battlefield and took refuge in Sage Bhāradvāja's Āṣram. While in the Āṣram, Divōdās performed a Putra Kāmēshṭi Yāga*, wishing for a son who could kill his enemy Vītahavya. Gālava, the son of a Muni, requested Divōdās to give him two hundred white horses from the king's stables. Divōdās gave Gālava the two hundred horses. In return, the Muni gave Yayāti's daughter Mādhavi to Divōdās. They had a son named Pratardhana (*also known as Pravardhana*). Divōdās later returned Mādhavi (see **Gālava**) to Gālava. *Mahā Bhārata*

Divōdās III – Son of Bhīmaratha. He was named Dyumanta and later came to be known as Divōdās. *Bhāgavata*

Divōdās IV – Son of Mudgala. He had a son named Mitrāyu. *Bhāgavata*

Dramiḷa – A king of the country called Kanyākubja, of a Yādava (*cowherd*) dynasty. His wife was Kaḷāvati. She was childless. Desirous of having a son, she stood in front of Sage Kaṣyapa while he was performing Tapas*. She gathered the Sage's semen and related the incident to her husband. He told her that she will have a son who will be a devotee of God because the semen was a Brahmin's and asked her to follow the Brahmin. He donated all his possessions to Brahmins, and with the power of Yōga, passed away on the banks of the river Ganga. The son born to his wife was Nārada. In a prior life, he was Upabarhaṇa, who had to be born to a Ṣūdra* woman due to a Ṣāpa*. *Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa*

Draupadi I – She was a Chhāya (*aspect or shadow*) of Goddess

Lakshmi. Just before the Asura* Rāvaṇa abducted Sīta, Agni (*the Fire God*) created a shadow Sīta to be the abductee and hid the real Sīta. That shadow performed Tapas* and obtained an incarnation as Draupadi. *Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa*

Draupadi II – When Drupada, king of Pānchāla performed a Yāga wishing for a son, a son and daughter emerged from the Yāga fire (see **Drōṇa**). The daughter that emerged from the fire was Draupadi. At the time of her birth, Ākāṣavāṇi* named her Kṛshṇa (*in Sanskrit, "black", perhaps due to her dark complexion*). She was called Draupadi (*meaning daughter of Drupada*) as she grew up. Drupada pampered her with great affection and dreamed of giving her to Arjuna in marriage. But by the time she came of marriageable age, he was devastated to hear that the Pānḍavas had perished (*in the wax house fire*). With a view to finding a suitable husband for Draupadi, he announced a Swayamvara* (*this one and the Swayamvara for Sīta were unusual in that they involved a test of strength or skill in lieu of the bride's choice*). A fast-revolving wheel with a mechanical fish attached to the edge was set up on the ceiling and the test was to hit the fish while looking at the reflection of the wheel in a pool of water on the floor. Many kings including Duryōdhana and Karṇa tried and failed while a Brahmin youth (*Arjuna in disguise*) succeeded. Draupadi put a garland of flowers around his neck, symbolizing her acceptance of him as her husband.

Even though she was aware of her father's wish to give her to Arjuna in marriage, Draupadi was not unhappy to marry a Brahmin. She accompanied him to the potter's house where the Pānḍavas were living at the time and did Namaskāra* to Kunti and

Dharmarāja. When she found out that she has to marry the four brothers of the man she chose at her Swayamvara as well in accordance with Kunti's directive (*that her five sons should share every thing equally, probably because she knew that they differed very widely in their abilities*) but against social tradition, she did not complain but accepted all five brothers as husbands. She realized a little while before the marriage that her husbands were, in fact, the Pāṇḍavas. She followed the rule laid out for her by Sage Nārada that she should live with each of her husbands for one year in a five-year cycle. She never showed any unhappiness at having to give up her royal lifestyle and live as a poor housewife. She regarded life with five husbands as happy and normal.

She had sons named Prativindya (*by Dharmarāja*), Ṣrutasēna (*by Bhīma*), Ṣrutakīrti (*by Arjuna*), Ṣatānīka (*by Nakula*), and Ṣrutakarma (*by Sahadēva*).

When Arjuna married Subhadra (*sister of Lord Kṛshṇa*), he sent Subhadra alone to Draupadi to do Namaskāra, being uncertain what Draupadi would say. Draupadi accepted Subhadra like a sister and did not get angry with Arjuna (*Arjuna eventually would marry three other women. Each of the Pāṇḍavas had at least one wife he did not share with his brothers, in addition to Draupadi, shared by all five*).

Dharmarāja was crowned king of Indraprastha and was performing the Rājasūya Yāga*. Draupadi herself was greeting the guests as they arrived. Duryōdhana and his retinue arrived. Duryōdhana was wonder-struck at the magnificence of the palace of the Pāṇḍavas. In one place that he thought was a small pool of

water, he raised his clothing while stepping in it and found out it was solid ground. In another spot, he stepped on what looked like solid ground and found out it was a pool of water. Draupadi, who was watching from a terrace, laughed out loud when Duryōdhana stepped in the water. She did not realize the harm that that laugh would cause her and her husbands. Duryōdhana noticed her scornful laughter and felt utterly humiliated. He decided to avenge the humiliation which he considered was deliberate.

Some time later, the Pāṇḍavas and Draupadi, responding to an invitation by Duryōdhana, went to Hastināpura. As Draupadi was chatting with Gāndhāri and her daughters-in-law, a servant of Duryōdhana named Prātikāmi entered the chamber and said to Draupadi "Dharmarāja wagred you and lost and the Kaurava Lord (*Duryōdhana*) summoned you to the Sabha (*court*)". Flabbergasted, Draupadi asked him "Did Dharmarāja lose me after he lost himself? Or did he lose me before he lost himself?" (*The point is, if the former, which was the way it happened, Dharmarāja would not have the right to offer her as the wager since he no longer would have been a free person and would have had no rights.*) When told that she raised a question and refused to come, Duryōdhana sent his younger brother Duṣṣāsana. Duṣṣāsana dragged her by her hair into the court. Duryōdhana asked Duṣṣāsana to remove her clothing (*she was in her period and wore a single piece of cloth instead of the normal elaborate garments Royal ladies would normally wear*). Duṣṣāsana proceeded to do so. However, even after he pulled great lengths of clothing off her, she remained covered. This should have alerted Duryōdhana to the fact that her status as a Pativrata* was protecting her but in his

arrogance and desire for vengeance, he signaled to her to sit on his lap. Duryōdhana's father tried to stop his son's assault on Draupadi and asked her to request a boon from him. She asked that her husbands be released from bondage and have their weapons returned to them. Dhṛtarāshṭra granted that wish and asked her to request something more. She refused, citing the protocol that a woman of royal birth should not ask more than two favours. Draupadi then returned to Indraprastha along with her husbands.

Not long afterwards, Dharmarāja gambled again and lost everything. She accompanied the Pāṇḍavas to exile in the forest. She was using an Akshayapātra *(special vessel granted to her by Sūrya, the Sun God which had the power to provide its owner with whatever they wished for*) to feed not only herself and her husbands but all the well-wishers who stayed with them. Soon after the Pāṇḍavas began their exile, Lord Kṛshṇa came to the forest to visit them and see how they were doing. Draupadi related to Him all the humiliations to which she and her husbands had been subjected, and cried. She argued with Dharmarāja that he should defeat Duryōdhana in battle and win his kingdom back. Dharmarāja would, of course, not listen to her. He lectured her about Karma (*the consequences of one's past actions*) and about the importance of righteousness. After that, Draupadi stopped worrying about their loss of power and exile in the forest and decided that she will be grateful for the supreme blessing that she and her husbands were all together and safe. Draupadi explained wifely duties to Kṛshṇa's Consort Satyabhama who had accompanied Him on the visit.

Once, while she was following her husbands on a stroll through

Dwaitavana (*the forest in which they chose to spend the exile*), a Saugandhika (*literally, of good fragrance*) flower blown by wind, landed near her feet. With the affinity to flowers natural to women, she requested her husbands to get her more of the flowers. Bhīma brought them to her after killing the Yakshas (*semi-divine beings with special magical powers*) who were protecting the garden where these flowers grew.

One day the Pāṇḍavas left Draupadi in the Āṣram of Sage Tṛṇabindu and went on a hunt. Saindhava (*prince of country named Sindhu; brother-in-law of the Kauravas*), on his way to the country of Sālva to marry the princess, happened to see Draupadi, felt lust for her and asked her to marry him. Draupadi explained her history and tried to convince him that his desire for her was immoral. He did not care and started to assault her. Draupadi pushed him to the ground, but he got back up and carried her into his chariot and was speeding away. Dharmarāja, hearing her cries and worried about what might have happened to her, rushed to the Āṣram along with his brothers. Draupadi was not there. On being informed that Saindhava abducted her, they pursued him, defeated him in the ensuing fight, humiliated him (*using one of the worst forms of humiliation to which a man can be subjected in the culture of the time – shaving half his face*) and brought Draupadi back to safety.

Twelve years of exile in the forest ended after many such mishaps. The Pāṇḍavas and Draupadi prepared for the year they had to remain incognito by changing their appearances and names (see **Arjuna**) and entered the capital of King Virāṭa. Draupadi assumed the name Mālini, intending to be a servant maid to the

queen. Sudhēshṇa, the queen was astounded by her beauty when she requested a position as the queen's personal maid. Draupadi told her a slightly modified true story that her five husbands had to live in the forest for a year and that she had to live apart from them for that year. Her husbands also obtained various positions in Virāṭa's court. She settled in the queen's service and was managing to keep in touch with them surreptitiously. One day Sudhēshṇa's brother Kīchaka happened to see Mālini in his sister's chamber and falling madly in love with her, expressed his desire to her. At first Mālini tried to dissuade him by reasoning with him but when he persisted, she boasted that her husbands can kill him. He then informed his sister of his desire and requested her to somehow help him satisfy his desire. (*As it happened, Virāṭa was not a strong or bold ruler. His brother-in-law was the true power behind the throne so that a 'request' from Kīchaka was, in reality, an order*) Sudhēshṇa told Mālini that she was thirsty and asked her to go and bring some wine from her brother's residence. Draupadi understood very well that the need for wine was just an excuse to send her into Kīchaka's arms and tried to talk her way out of the errand, but was not successful. She prayed to Sūrya (*the Sun God*) to keep her safe from harm and went to Kīchaka's residence. By Sūrya's grace, a force field covered her so that when Kīchaka tried to assault her, she was able to push him off using the force, ran to the king's court and complained about Kīchaka's assault. She was particularly hurt by the fact that her husbands, who were all in the court, remained silent. Bhīma was about to pull a nearby tree from the ground and kill Kīchaka with it. Dharmarāja restrained him whispering that it is not time yet. Seeing Draupadi still standing in

court, he demanded to know why she was behaving like a court dancer. Angrily replying that her husband is a dancer and she was just imitating him, she left the court. Sudhēshṇa, pretending innocence, consoled her.

Draupadi was very upset emotionally. She could neither forget nor forgive the humiliation she had suffered. When everyone else was asleep, she narrated the sad story of what happened to her to Bhīma and wept. Bhīma, who had obtained Dharmarāja's permission to quietly kill Kīchaka, gave her an idea. He asked her to pretend to consent to Kīchaka's demand if he approached her again and arrange a reandezvous at a lonely place. Kīchaka, as expected, approached her again and delighted that she was finally going to give in to him, reached the assigned place. Bhīma was waiting there in the dark, wearing feminine clothing, impersonating Draupadi. When Kīchaka embraced him thinking it was Mālini, Bhīma attacked and killed him. Draupadi, who was there with Bhīma, was ecstatic, and proclaimed "See what my husbands were able to do!" Kīchaka's younger brothers, known as Upakīchakas, upset that Mālini caused their brother's death, tied her to Kīchaka's corpse and took her to the cremation ground. Hearing her cries, Bhīma (*who was disguised as a chef in the royal kitchen with the name Valala*), killed the Upakīchakas and freed Draupadi.

Virāṭa, afraid of what might happen if this woman stayed in his city, asked Queen Sudhēshṇa to sweet-talk her into leaving. When Sudhēshṇa asked her nicely to go away, Mālini asked for permission to stay for thirteen more days.

(*Duryōdhana had received intelligence indicating that the*

Pānḍavas were spending their incognito year in Virāṭa's court and had an ally attack and steal Virāṭa's cattle. He was beaten back) King Virāṭa was praising his son Uttara for defeating the cattle-thieves, Dharmarāja (*disguised as a Brahmin and counselor in the court*) interjected that it was probably the prince's chariot-driver who secured the victory. This angered the king who threw the dice in his hands at Dharmarāja who started to bleed. Mālini (*Draupadi*), standing nearby, wiped the blood off Dharmarāja's forehead with her saree. When the king demanded to know why she did so, Mālini said "There will be drought in this land for as many years as the number of drops of this Brahmin's blood that falls on the ground. That is why I prevented the blood from dropping."

As the incognito year ended, the Pānḍavas and Draupadi revealed their true identities and were greeted and treated with great respect (*one of the reasons Dharmarāja chose* Virāṭa*'s city to stay in during this period was that Virāṭa would be friendly*). The wedding of Arjuna's son Abhimanyu with Princess Uttara (*daughter of King Virāṭa*) was celebrated in the presence of Drupada, Lord Kṛshṇa and Balarāma. A concensus was reached among these well-wishers of the Pānḍavas that it was best to try and reach a peaceful agreement with the Kauravas. King Drupada's royal priest was sent as an emissary to the Kaurava court in a futile attempt to avoid war.

Kṛshṇa Himself subsequently went to negotiate peace. Dharmarāja requested Kṛshṇa to try for a peaceful settlement at any cost. Bhīma and Arjuna went along, as they usually followed Dharmarāja's lead. However, Draupadi did not like the idea of

peace. She sorrowfully described to Kṛshṇa all the humiliations she had suffered at the hands of the Kauravas. Kṛshṇa indicated to her that war was inevitable before he left. War was declared eventually. Towards the end of the war, Bhīma killed Duṣṣāsana and tore his chest open and drank some of the blood. Since the moment when Duṣṣāsana dragged her into the court by her hair, Draupadi left the hair loose and finally tied it into a bun after Bhīma applied the blood of Duṣṣāsana as hair-dressing, fulfilling the vow she had taken. At the end of the war, Aṣvatthāma (*fulfilling a promise he made to Duryōdhana as he was about to die*) killed Draupadi's five sons Prativindya, Ṣrutasōma, Ṣrutakīrti, Ṣatānīka, and Ṣrutasēna while they were sleeping. When Bhīma threatened to kill Aṣvatthāma in retaliation, Draupadi stopped him saying it is a sin to kill a Brahmin. The Pānḍavas ruled the empire they won in the Mahā Bhārata war but Draupadi did not enjoy the fruits of victory too long. At the start of Kali Yuga, the Pānḍavas abdicated, leaving Abhimanyu's son Parīkshit, the sole remnant of the Kuru dynasty, on the throne. Draupadi, alone among all their wives, accompanied them on their trek to heaven on the slopes of the Himālaya mountain. She dropped dead on the way and went to Swarga (*heaven*). She could not reach Swarga in her physical body, supposedly because she was partial towards Arjuna. Draupadi was Indrasēna in a previous life. *Mahā Bhārata*

Draviḍa – An Asura*. He was in love with the wife of Ugrasēna but it was impossible for him to have her. One day, while she was taking a bath, he assumed Ugrasēna's form and approached her. She assumed it was her husband and had sex with him. Afterwards, realizing that it was an Asura who had deceived her,

she proclaimed that the son that would be born to her from the Asura's semen would be an Asura and would be killed by someone born within her family. The son born to her by the Asura was Kamsa. *Hari Vamṣa*

Draviṇa – Son of Dhara (*Earlier incarnation of Yaṣōda, Kṛshṇa's foster mother*). *Mahā Bhārata*

Dṛḍhadhanva – A king. Father of Utpalāvati. *Mārkanḍēya Purāṇa*

Dṛḍhānya – Son of Lōpāmudra and Sage Agastya. Father of Tējasvi. *Mahā Bhārata*

Dṛḍharatha – A king of the dynasty of Kakshēya. Son of Jayadratha (*also known as Saindhava*). *Mahā Bhārata*

Dṛḍhāṣva – Son of Dundhumāra and father of Haryaṣva. *Bhāgavata*

Dṛḍhāyu – Son of the Apsara* Ūrvaṣi and Purūrava (*son of Budha* and Ila, who was King Sudyumna turned into a woman*). *Mahā Bhārata*

Dṛhi – Son of Ṣarmishṭha and Yayāti. Yayāti once asked him to take his old age and give him (*Yayāti*) his youth. Dṛhi rejected his father's request. Yayāti, angry at the rejection, gave him a Ṣāpa* that his descendants will not be eligible to rule and will die before they became old. *Mahā Bhārata*

Drōṇa I – The most important of the (*eight*) Vasus. Lord Brahma requested him and his wife to take birth as humans on the earth. He agreed to do so if he is given the desire to be a devotee of Vishṇu. *Bhāgavata*

Drōṇa II – He married a woman named Dhara. They were childless for a long time. They went to the Gandhamādana mountain to pray to Lord Vishṇu hoping for children. A long time passed but Vishṇu did not appear to them. Losing hope, they entered the fire. Ākāṣavāṇi* told them that they will raise Vishṇu Himself as their son. Drōṇa was born as Nanda and Dhara was born as Yaṣōda. They raised Lord Kṛshṇa in His childhood (see **Vasudēva**). *Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa*

Drōṇa III – He was born from the semen spontaneously ejaculated by Sage Bharadvāja on seeing the Apsara* Ghṛtāchi. He grew up in his father's Āṣram and was learning the Vēdas and related knowledge. At the same time, he became an expert archer and obtained divine weapons including Āgnēyāstra from a Muni named Agnivēṣa. He and King Drupada were friends and classmates since childhood.

After completing his education and on the direction of his father, he married the younger sister of Kṛpa (*who was a weapons instructor and elder statesman in the Kaurava court along with Drōṇa*) named Kṛpi, with the intention of raising a family (*specifically, hoping to beget a son*). A son named Aṣvatthāma was born to the couple. The boy, seeing the sons of the wealthy drinking milk, wanted some and cried. Drōṇa was saddened to see his baby son's desire for milk, and at his extreme poverty and inability to fulfill his son's desire. Drōṇa set out to earn money. First, he went to Paraṣurāma, having heard that he was making great charitable donations. However, by the time Drōṇa arrived, Paraṣurāma had already given away all his wealth. Paraṣurāma had kept only his many powerful and divine weapons. Drōṇa

requested and obtained the secrets of the weapons (*Astras, literally arrows, but weapons of great power and diverse effects, could only be launched or aborted by chanting special secret Mantras which were zealously guarded by those who knew them. Most Astras could only be learnt by great Tapas* or serving a Guru until the Guru had confidence in the disciple's character and that the disciple will not use the weapons improperly*) and returned home. Foiled in his attempts to acquire any money, Drōṇa remembered that his childhood friend Drupada was now a king. Drōṇa then went to Drupada's court and greeted Drupada. Drupada denied any knowledge of Drōṇa and mocked Drōṇa's assertion that a poor Brahmin like him was a friend of a great king such as himself. Now thoroughly depressed and discouraged, he took his wife and son along and went to Hastināpura (*the traditional capital of the Kaurava empire*). On the way, he saw Duryōdhana and his brothers around a well, wondering how to retrieve the ball with which they were playing, which had fallen into the well. Drōṇa approached them and learning that their ball was in the well, reassured them that he will retrieve it in a way not known to anyone else. He hit the ball with an arrow, another arrow into the first arrow and so on until a "rope of arrows" was created with one end of it within reach and the other stuck to the ball. He then pulled out the ball and returned it to the boys. The princes related the event in detail to Dhṛtarāshṭra and Bhīshma. Bhīshma had Drōṇa brought to the Sabha (*court*), gave him much wealth and asked Drōṇa to teach archery to the princes.

Drōṇa settled in and was teaching archery to the sons of Dhṛtarāshṭra and Pāṇḍu. Of all the princes, Drōṇa became very

fond of Arjuna, who was also displaying greater skills in archery than any of his brothers or cousins. Drōṇa gave special attention to Arjuna and taught him exclusively unique skills including man-to-man fighting, miscellaneous useful tricks, and the ability to penetrate and exit Vyūhas *(Vyūha is an intricate military formation designed to ambush and isolate a feared enemy from his supporting forces. It took specialized knowledge on the part of a warrior to enter and exit such formations, of which the Padma or lotus-shaped formation was a specially difficult one to breach.)* When their training in archery was complete, he examined them and as Guru Dakshiṇa*, he asked each of them to defeat and capture King Drupada (*who had lied about their childhood friendship and humiliated Drōṇa*) and bring him (*Drupada*) to him (*Drōṇa*). Arjuna went, defeated Drupada and brought him to Drōṇa, as a bound captive. Drōṇa, reminding Drupada of their childhood friendship and Drupada's arrogant behaviour towards him in his time of need, insulted Drupada before releasing him. Humiliated by being placed at Drōṇa's feet hog-tied, and even more so by Drōṇa's magnanimous gesture of letting him go, Drupada sought the help of Brahmins to find a way to destroy Drōṇa. He performed a Yāga called Putra Kāmēshṭi*, hoping for a son who could kill Drōṇa. Drōṇa, enormously pleased with Arjuna for enabling him to avenge his humiliation by Drupada, taught Arjuna a very special weapon named Brahmaṣira, which made Arjuna his equal in archery. He made Arjuna promise not to attempt to use the weapon against him.

In addition to being the archery Guru to the princes, Drōṇa was also an adviser to Dhṛtarāshṭra. He was saddened to learn that the

Pāṇḍavas had perished in the fire in the wax house while enroute to Vāraṇāsi (*present-day Benares*). He did not know of the perfidy of Duryōdhana. When he later learned that the Pāṇḍavas were not only alive and well, but had married Draupadi and were living in Drupada's city, he was relieved and happy.

At about this time, Dhṛtarāshṭra invited Drōṇa and other senior advisers to a conference and asked for their ideas on how to kill the Pāṇḍavas. Drōṇa was stunned. Bhīshma remonstrated that that was improper. Drōṇa was furious at Dhṛtarāshṭra's evil intent but remained silent because it was the king he served that broached the subject. However, after Bhīshma spoke up, he seconded Bhīshma's suggestion that the Pāṇḍavas should be invited to the capital. Duryōdhana and Karṇa were angry with Drōṇa for siding with the Pāṇḍavas. Karṇa spoke abusively to Drōṇa. Even though Drōṇa was unable to enjoy the Pāṇḍavas' company due to their absence, and he took care not to praise them in Duryōdhana's presence, Duryōdhana was firmly convinced that Drōṇa was partial to his enemies. But Drōṇa had the respect of both Bhīshma and Dhṛtarāshṭra. In due course, the Pāṇḍavas did come to Hastināpura, received their share of the empire, built their capital at Indraprastha and were living there. However much Drōṇa liked the Pāṇḍavas and was especially fond of Arjuna, Drōṇa did not go with them (*this is typical of the elders in Dhṛtarāshṭra's court. While they were opposed to Duryōdhana's plots to destroy the Pāṇḍavas, their loyalty to the royal family headed at the time by Dhṛtarāshṭra, kept them on the Kaurava side through the Mahā Bhārata war, fully aware that they will not survive the war*). Drōṇa's gratitude to Bhīshma for honouring him with the position

of archery Guru overcame his distaste for Duryōdhana's machinations and kept him with Bhīshma. Bhīshma himself was bound to the empire in order to fulfill his promise to his father that he will always uphold the reputation of the empire no matter who the emperor was. Soon thereafter, the Pānḍavas lost every thing at the rigged games of chance and left for the forest.

Even though he had no contact with the Pānḍavas throughout their exile of twelve years and a year incognito, and served the royal family, Drōṇa retained his favourable opinion and fond feelings for the Pānḍavas. One of Duryōdhana's plots to expose the Pānḍavas before the end of the incognito year was to abduct the herds of cows of King Virāṭa because spies had indicated that the Pānḍavas were hiding in Virāṭa's kingdom. Drōṇa accompanied Bhīshma, Karṇa, Duryōdhana, and the Kaurava army on the expedition. There he noticed prince Uttara and his chariot-driver Bṛhannala. Convinced that Bṛhannala was, in fact, Arjuna, Drōṇa became concerned that Arjuna was going to be exposed before the completion of the incognito period and quietly conveyed his concern to Bhīshma. Bhīshma relieved his concern by explaining that the year had ended (*considering the differences between a lunar and solar calendar*). Unable to contain his happiness that the Pānḍavas had fulfilled the conditions of their exile (*and avoided having to repeat the whole process, which they would have to do if they were discovered even one day before the end of the incognito year*), he praised Arjuna's prowess and opined that Arjuna could not be defeated. These words were displeasing to Karṇa (*the only credible rival to Arjuna in archery on the Kaurava side, on whom Duryōdhana was counting to win the*

coming war) and he scolded Drōṇa. Upset by Karṇa's harsh rebuke, Drōṇa was about to leave the battlefield. Bhīshma came forward and speaking diplomatically, reconciled the factions. The Kauravas returned home defeated by Arjuna.

Duryōdhana, and to a greater extent Karṇa, resented and hated Drōṇa. While avoiding direct conflict with them, Drōṇa continued to advise against precipitous actions against the Pāṇḍavas. When Lord Kṛshṇa came as the Pāṇḍavas' emissary to negotiate peace and afterwards, Drōṇa argued that peace with the Pāṇḍavas was in the best interest of everyone. Duryōdhana, of course, paid no heed.

Eventually, war broke out between the Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas. Even though both the Kaurava and Pāṇḍava princes were his disciples, Drōṇa did not remain neutral but fought on the Kaurava side. He first had a skirmish with Dhṛshṭadyumna (*son of Drupada who emerged from the Yāga fire, full grown, along with Draupadi*) and fought ferociously against the Pāṇḍava army. He also fought Ghaṭōtkacha (*Bhīma's Asura* son, by Hiḍimbi; each of the Pāṇḍavas had at least one wife he did not share with his brothers, in addition to Draupadi, shared by all five*). After Bhīshma left the battlefield and lay on a bed of arrows (*waiting for an auspicious time to die*), Drōṇa was made the commander-in-chief of the Kaurava army. Even though he was always fond of the Pāṇḍavas, and even knowing that Duryōdhana hated him for it, his loyalty to the ruler at the time trumped all of that and he fought with the single-minded intention of winning the war for the Kaurava side. He was so pleased to be made commander-in-chief that he offered Duryōdhana a boon. Duryōdhana asked that he bring Dharmarāja

as a captive and not kill him. Drōṇa promised to do so and attacked the Pāṇḍava army, using the divine weapons he had at his command. Arjuna and the other great warriors on the Pāṇḍava side were protecting Dharmarāja.

Drōṇa penetrated the Pāṇḍava lines and attacked Dharmarāja. Warriors including Simhasēna and Vyāghradatta came to Dharmarāja's aid and were killed by Drōṇa. He injured the twins Nakula and Sahadēva. Soldiers in the Pāṇḍava army were shouting that Dharmarāja was in danger of being captured. Arjuna was furiously firing arrows. Just then, the sun set and the battle was stopped for the day (*protocols and the rules of engagement, which called for cessation of hostilities from sunset until sunrise the next day, were strictly observed*). Several warriors including Satyajit and Sūryadat had died at the hands of Drōṇa before then. On the day Arjuna vowed to kill Saindhava before sunset, Drōṇa, shouting "How will you get to him without defeating me?", shot arrows at Arjuna. Arjuna, returning fire, penetrated the formation and fought fiercely. This made Duryōdhana angry and he accused Drōṇa of allowing Arjuna to penetrate the defences because of his partiality for the Pāṇḍavas. Drōṇa first explained that he drew Arjuna into the formation as part of the plan to isolate and capture Dharmarāja. Furious at the false accusation, Drōṇa plunged into battle with redoubled determination. Dharmarāja, when he was defeated, retreated to Arjuna's chariot. Drōṇa killed Virāṭa (*father-in-law of Abhimanyu*) and Drupada (*father-in-law of Arjuna*), who were fighting in support of the Pāṇḍavas. Finally, Drōṇa and Arjuna engaged each other one-on-one in the battle. The fight between them went on for a long time with neither of them gaining

the upper hand. The Dēvas came to watch this epic battle between two great archers who could not be defeated by anyone else. Lord Kṛshṇa, aware that Arjuna could not defeat his Guru and that Drōṇa could not continue to live if his son Aṣvatthāma should die, made Bhīma shout loudly that Aṣvatthāma had died. Perhaps considering the source, Drōṇa ignored Bhīma and continued his rampage through the Pānḍava army, raining arrows on Dhṛshṭadyumna. Then great Sages including Viṣvāmitra, Jamadagni (*father of Paraṣurāma*) and Bharadvāja appeared to Drōṇa and pleaded with him, saying "O Great Brahmin! Even though you fought many battles in the past, fighting is not an appropriate activity for you (*being a Brahmin rather than a Kshatriya*), your time is gone." Disturbed by this advice and remembering what he heard Bhīma shout earlier, he asked Dharmarāja for news of his son, because Dharmarāja would always speak the truth. Kṛshṇa had insisted (*knowing that Drōṇa would not trust anyone but Dharmarāja*) that Dharmarāja confirm that Aṣvatthāma had died (*Kṛshṇa might have been the only one who knew how much of a lie that is, because He would know that Aṣvatthāma was one of the five Immortals*), using as an excuse the fact that an elephant, also named Aṣvatthāma, had died that day on the battlefield, Dharmaraja proclaimed loudly that Aṣvatthāma had died, adding "the elephant" under his breath. It was arranged to have trumpets and horns blown so that the words "the elephant" could not be heard. Drōṇa believed that his son had died once he heard it from Dharmarāja and renouncing his weapons, handed command over to Duryōdhana, Kṛpa and Karṇa. He then climbed his chariot and using his spiritual power, ascended to heaven in the

form of a brilliant light. Dhṛshṭadyumna then walked to Drōṇa's chariot and symbolically and in a class-less act, "killed" him by severing his head. *Mahā Bhārata*

Drōṇa IV – A (*articulate*) bird. He was born to a bird named Jarita and a Muni named Mandapāla, while Mandapāla took the form of a bird. He married a bird named Tārkshi. He had sons named Pingāksha, Virāṭa, Vṛta, and Sumukha. Sage Jaimini asked questions of these birds and had his doubts cleared. *Mārkanḍēya Purāṇa*

Druhya – He was one of the sons of Yayāti and Ṣarmishṭha. *Bhāgavata*

Drumasēna – He fought Karṇa's son in the Mahā Bhārata war and was killed by him. *Mahā Bhārata*

Drupada – Son of Pṛshata, king of the country of Pānchāla. The manner of his birth was strange. Once, Pṛshata, while performing Tapas*, saw the Apsara* (*not clear if she just happened to be visiting earth or was sent by Indra* to disrupt the Tapas, as he usually did*) Mēnaka gathering flowers nearby and spontaneously ejaculated. Ashamed at his lack of self-control, he hid the semen under his foot. Drupada was born from the semen. Pṛshata left the baby in the Āṣram of Sage Bharadvāja and returned to the city. Drupada learnt archery together with Drōṇa, son of Sage Bharadvāja. Drupada succeeded his father as king of Pānchāla. He married a woman named Kōkilā Dēvi.

After he became king, Drōṇa came to his Sabha (*court*) and requested Drupada to give him money, saying "I was your boyhood friend". Even though he remembered Drōṇa as his

classmate, Drupada displaying excessive pride in his status as the king, mocked Drōṇa and sent him away. Drōṇa did not forget this humiliation as long as he lived. He was determined to somehow humiliate Drupada. Drōṇa obtained a position as the Guru of archery for the Kaurava and Pāṇḍava princes. When their training in archery was complete, he examined them and as Guru Dakshiṇa*, he asked each of them to defeat and capture King Drupada and bring him (*Drupada*) to him (*Drōṇa*). The Kaurava princes, headed by Duryōdhana, tried and returned after they were defeated in battle by Drupada. Arjuna went next, defeated Drupada and brought him to Drōṇa, as a bound captive. Humiliated by being placed at Drōṇa's feet hog-tied, and even more so by Drōṇa's magnanimous gesture of setting him free, Drupada sought the help of Brahmins to find a way to destroy Drōṇa. He performed a Yāga called Putra Kāmēshṭi*, hoping for a son who could kill Drōṇa and a daughter whom he could give to Arjuna in marriage (*hoping to turn him against Drōṇa, perhaps*). A boy named Dhṛshṭadyumna and a girl named Draupadi emerged from the sacrificial fire. Drupada had Dhṛshṭadyumna well trained in all the warrior arts and was planning to offer Draupadi in marriage to Arjuna. Just then, news came out that the Pāṇḍavas died when the wax house in which they were staying burned down. His priest assured him that the Pāṇḍavas would be alive and safe. Even though he was not sure that Arjuna would be able to come, he announced a Swayamvara* (*in this case, the winner happened to be a Brahmin, or more precisey, a Kshatriya disguised as a Brahmin*) for Draupadi. A fast-revolving wheel with a mechanical fish attached to the edge was set up on the ceiling. The test was to

hit the fish while looking at the reflection of the wheel in a pool of water on the floor. Many princes tried and failed. A Brahmin youth succeeded. Drupada, faithful to his word, sent Draupadi with the Brahmin youth but inquired as to who he was. Learning that it was Arjuna himself in disguise, he was ecstatic. As Drupada was making arrangements for the marriage of his daughter with Arjuna, the Pāṇḍavas informed him that all five of them will marry her. As Drupada was in shock at this strange turn of events, Sage Vyāsa arrived and comforted Drupada by showing him with Divya Dṛshṭi* that the five Pāṇḍavas were really one (see **Indrasēna**). Drupada then performed Draupadi's marriage with the Pāṇḍavas and sent her with them.

After they left Drupada's city, the Pāṇḍavas were happy for some time. They built a city named Indraprastha and were ruling the region known as Khāṇḍavaprastha. Dharmarāja performed a Yāga named Rājasūya*. Drupada attended the Yāga and was very happy to see that his daughter and sons-in-law were doing very well. However, his happiness and their well-being were short-lived. The Pāṇḍavas lost everything to the Kauravas in rigged games of chance and went into exile in the forest. Drupada was unable to visit the Pāṇḍavas during their twelve-year stay in the forest. After the Pāṇḍavas finished their year living incognito as well, Drupada went to Virāṭa's city to attend the wedding of his grandnephew Abhimanyu. It was there that Kṛshṇa and other well-wishers of the Pāṇḍavas were discussing how the Pāṇḍavas should proceed. Drupada agreed with the concensus that an emissary should be sent to Duryōdhana (*to see if he relinquishes their share of the kingdom in accordance with the agreement at the end of the*

games of chance). Drupada sent his royal priest to the Sabha (*court*) of the Kauravas. No peaceful resolution was possible and war became inevitable. Drupada was killed by Drōṇa in the war. *Mahā Bhārata*

Dundubhi I – A Gandharva* woman. When the Dēvas went to Lord Brahma and complained that the Asura* Rāvaṇa was causing terrible harm, He reassured them that Lord Vishṇu would take a human incarnation to kill him. At the same time, Brahma sent Dundubhi to earth as a hunchback named Manthara to facilitate a divine purpose. Her mission was to advise Kaikēyi to ask that Rāma be exiled to the forest for fourteen years, paving the way for the abduction of Sīta and the destruction of Rāvaṇa *Rāmāyaṇa*

Dundubhi II – An Asura*, son of Maya*. He once went to Himavān (*the king of mountains. In the Purāṇas, mountains are anthropomorphed into men*) and challenged him to a battle. Himavān told him, "I cannot fight you but Vāli (*older brother of Sugrīva and king of Vānaras**) is a worthy opponent. If you go to the garden named Madhuvana and call him out, he will come and give you a battle up to your standard." Dundubhi went to Vāli's Madhuvana and shouting his name loudly, started trashing the garden and challenging Vāli. Vāli came out, fought and killed Dundubhi. As he lifted Dundubhi's carcass and dropped it to the ground, a drop of Dundubhi's blood fell on Sage Matanga who was performing Tapas* on nearby Ṛṣyamūka Mountain. The Sage gave Vāli a Ṣāpa* that if Vāli ever set foot on that mountain, he will die. Dundubhi's son was Māyāvi. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Durdama – A king. Father of Raivata Manu*. One day, he went to

the Āṣram of a Muni named Pramukha. He did not find the Muni at his Āṣram, but instead seeing a young woman Rēvati, addressed her as "Dear!" and asked her where the Muni went. Sage Pramukha, coming from inside, happy to see the king to whom he had intended to give his daughter Rēvati in marriage, said to him, "You addressed my daughter as 'Dear'. Therefore, you shall become my son-in-law", and gave him Rēvati in marriage. He also said to Durdama, "I want to give you a dowry. Ask for something that is really hard to acquire." Durdama accordingly said, "I want a son who will be a Manu." Pramukha willed for his wish to be fulfilled, using his spiritual power. Raivata, his son by Rēvati, became Manu. *Mārkanḍēya Purāṇa*

Durdamna – A woodsman. He went to the Āṣram of Bhāradvāja with Yudhājit. *Dēvī Bhāgavata*

Durgā Dēvi – (*One of the many names of Dēvi, the Supreme Being*) Also known as Chanḍika. She got the name Durga because she killed an Asura* named Durgama. *Mārkanḍēya Purāṇa*

Durgu – An Asura*. When he was harassing Munis, they went and related their plight to Lord Ṣiva. Ṣiva in turn informed His consort, Pārvati. Pārvati went to the Vindhya mountain and performed Tapas* to create a Ṣakti (*power or force*) named Kāḷarātri (*literally, 'Black Night' in Sanskrit*) and sent her to the Asura to convince him to stop harassing Munis. He tried to capture Kāḷarātri instead. She ran back to Pārvati and related what had happened. The Asura, chasing Kāḷarātri, also came to Pārvati. Pārvati killed him in battle. (*Kāṣi Khanḍa is a 'Sthala Purāṇa'**.) *Kāṣi Khanḍa*

Durjaya I – A king. Son of Supratīka and his wife Vidyutprabha. He and his younger brother Sudyumna ruled the kingdom together. The brothers waged war and defeated every monarch around, including even Indra*. One day, while he was strolling through the garden of Kubēra (*God of Wealth*), he saw two young women, Sukēṣi and Mitrakēṣi, daughters of Hēti and Prahēti. The king and the young women instantly fell passionately in love with each other. When they found out that their daughters were in love, Hēti and Prahēti performed the marriage of their respective daughters with Durjaya at the same time. Durjaya had sons named Suprabha by Sukēṣi and Sudarṣana by Mitrakēṣi. Durjaya became a womanizer and handed the kingdom over to his younger brother. One day, he went on a hunting trip and became exhausted. A Muni named Gauramukha, seeing him, offered him hospitality because he was a king and looked tired. Annoyed that a Muni, who subsisted on vegetables in the woods, was offering hospitality to a king like himself, but curious to find out what kind of hospitality he could provide, the tired king accepted the offer. Gauramukha prayed to Lord Vishṇu to give him the provisions needed to serve a dinner fit for a king and his retinue. Lord Vishṇu gave the Muni a magical diamond. With the power of the diamond, the Muni created a city in which he had the king rest in a magnificent palace with servants to cater to his every need, and served the king and his retinue a sumptuous dinner. Durjaya was astonished at the sudden opulence of the Muni. Then he found out that it was all due to the magical power of a diamond. The king wished to acquire the diamond by any means. He had his minister Virōchana request the Muni for it, but was rebuffed. Durjaya returned to his

city and dispatched an army headed by a man named Nīla to take the diamond. Nīla stopped his chariot in front of Gauramukha's Āṣram. Gauramukha was not at the Āṣram but the diamond was. Chariots, horses, and warriors emerged from the diamond and attacked Nīla and his army. After some time, Durjaya himself arrived and joined the battle against the forces unleashed by the diamond. Gauramukha, returning to his Āṣram, was shocked and frightened by the ongoing battle. He prayed to Lord Vishṇu again. Lord Vishṇu, armed with his Chakra*, came and killed Durjaya and his army. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Durjaya II – Daughter of Daksha's daughter Danu. *Mahā Bhārata*

Durjaya III – A king. Descendant of Kārtavīrya. Once, he saw the Apsara* Ūrvaṣi and fell in love with her. He left his wife and stayed with Ūrvaṣi for a long time. After he returned to his wife, she persuaded him to seek knowledge of Dharma from Sage Kaṇva. Soon after he received Sage Kaṇva's instruction and left the Āṣram, he saw a Gandharva* wearing a necklace he had earlier presented to Ūrvaṣi. He attacked the Gandharva and retrieved the necklace. He then searched for Ūrvaṣi and on finding her, tried to force her to have sex with him. Afraid of Sage Kaṇva's disapproval, she tried to convince him that his desire for her was improper. When he continued to force himself on her, she appeared to him with reddish brown eyes and a body covered with hair. Disgusted by her appearance, he lost his lust for her and returned home. *Kalki (Bhavishya) Purāṇa*

Durmarshaṇa – A king. He defeated a king named Satyaratha and

acquired his kingdom. Satyaratha's son Dharmagupta killed him and reclaimed the kingdom. *Brahma Purāṇa; Skānda Purāṇa*

Durmukha – One of the counselors of Rāvaṇa. He gave the advice that it is better to engage Rāma in battle rather than accede to his demand that Sīta be returned to Him. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Durvāsa – A Muni. He was born, with aspects of Lord Ṣiva, to Sage Atri and his wife Anasūya. When Sage Atri prayed for a son, Brahma, Vishṇu, and Ṣiva (*Trimūrti, the Hindu Trinity*) appeared to him together. They told him that the three of them are actually one and that he will have sons with aspects of all three of them. Anasūya also expressed her wish for sons with attributes of the Trimūrti. While Anasūya was pregnant, a king named Haihaya caused her fetus to abort. Lord Ṣiva then entered her womb and was born as her son, Durvāsa. *Mārkanḍēya Purāṇa*

Once, Lord Ṣiva was returning after killing the Tripurāsuras, with an arrow under his arm. The arrow was in the shape of a boy. The Dēvas asked him, "Who is the boy?" Ṣiva told them the boy was Durvāsa.

Once, Durvāsa went to the residence of King Kuntibhōja. The king's adopted daughter, Kunti attended to Durvāsa's needs. Pleased with her, he taught her a Mantra which, when invoked, will bring to her any Dēva she 'thought of'*, who will give her a son instantly and without loss of her virginity. *Mahā Bhārata*

Once, while Durvāsa was performing Tapas* on the Gandhamādana mountain, he was distracted by the sound of the squeals of pleasure by the Apsara* Tilōttama and Sāhasika (*son of Bali*) engaged in sexual acts nearby. Angered by the disturbance, Durvāsa gave them a Ṣāpa* that they shall become Asuras*.

Sāhasika became an Asura in the form of a Gārdabha (*donkey*). Seeing the romantic activities of Tilōttama and Sāhasika aroused sexual desire in Durvāsa. Just then, Sage Aurva came there, accompanied by his daughter Kandaḷi and offered her in marriage to Durvāsa. Durvāsa accepted her and enjoyed sexual pleasures with her for some time. As it happened, Kandaḷi was also hot tempered. Tiring of her and her short temper, Durvāsa left her and was performing Tapas again. Kandaḷi stayed near him. A Brahmin boy approached Durvāsa and said to him, "After all, your wife is Ardhāngi (*half of your body*). Is it proper for you to leave half your body alone? She will be your wife in all your future lives. She will lose her short temper. Her descendants will constitute a dynasty named Kadaḷi on earth." *Brahmānḍa Purāṇa*

Once, while on a world tour, Durvāsa accepted a garland of flowers from the hands of a Vidyādhara (*semi-divine beings with special magical powers including shape-shifting*) woman he encountered on the way. A little later, he gave the garland to Indra* who was taking a leisurely stroll in a garden in Indra Lōka (*Indra's world*). Indra put the garland on his elephant. The elephant threw it to the ground. Indra and other Dēvas who were around, laughed derisively at the actions of Indra and his elephant. Durvāsa, feeling insulted by the treatment of his gift, gave Indra a Ṣāpa that all his wealth will be submerged in the ocean. That was when Amṛtam* and other valuable possessions of Indra became part of the ocean. *Vishṇu Purāṇa*

Once, after Ambarīsha, son of Nābhāga performed a religious rite named Dwādaṣivrata, and ensured that all the invited Brahmins had a sumptuous feast, he was ready to start eating his own meal

when Sage Durvāsa (*known for his quick temper and ready Ṣāpas for hurling at any one by whom he felt slighted*) arrived. Ambarīsha invited him to have dinner and waited for him to freshen up. Durvāsa was taking an inordinately long time on his bath and Ambarīsha was concerned that the day (*Dwādaṣi, the twelfth day of the lunar fortnight*) would end before Durvāsa returns. Ambarīsha was in a quandary because he could not have his meal until Durvāsa finishes his, and if Ambarīsha did not eat before the end of Dwādaṣi, the beneficial results of the religious rite would not accrue to him. He consulted his elder advisers on how to ensure the benefits of the rite without violating the rule of not eating before a guest finishes his meal. They advised that he should drink some water which would fulfill the requirements of the religious rite without violating the restriction on eating before a guest ate his meal. Ambarīsha did accordingly but Durvāsa, arriving back and realizing that the host drank water without waiting for him, became angry. Durvāsa created an Asura called Mahākṛtya from a lock of his hair to attack Ambarīsha. Lord Vishṇu's Chakra* killed Mahākṛtya and pursued Durvāsa. Durvāsa ran to Lord Brahma first and then to Lord Ṣiva seeking protection from the Chakra. When they could not help him, he went to Lord Vishṇu Himself and begged Him to save him. Lord Vishṇu told him that He was under the control of His devotees and only Ambarīsha himself could save Durvāsa. Durvāsa then went back to Ambarīsha, apologised to him and begged for his life. Ambarīsha took pity on Durvāsa and prayed to Lord Vishṇu to recall His weapon.

Once, Durvāsa went to Kṛshṇa's residence with the intention of

testing Him. He started harassing Him, alternately asking for food and refusing to eat it, and alternating between showing a pleasant and unpleasant look on his face. He asked Kṛshṇa to cover his body with rice pudding. He then covered Rukmiṇi's body with the rice pudding he had made Kṛshṇa put on his body. Kṛshṇa remained silent and calm no matter what Durvāsa was doing. Then Durvāsa tied Rukmiṇi to a chariot (*in place of a horse*). Even then, Kṛshṇa continued to obey Durvāsa without complaining. Durvāsa then gave Kṛshṇa some praise but complaining that Kṛshṇa covered most of his body with rice pudding but missed the underside of his feet, gave Him a Ṣāpa that those would be the parts of Kṛshṇa's body that would put Him at risk of His life (*the point of this story seems to be not so much the actual details, but the fact that the spiritual power of Sages' Tapas was so great that even a self-aware incarnation of Lord Vishṇu had to abide by it. An additional aspect of this event is that Kṛshṇa needed a 'means of exit' from the Avatāra*). *Bhāgavata*

Once, Lord Rāma was engaged in a private conversation with a Brahmin (*Yama, the God of Death, in disguise*) after ordering His brother, Lakshmaṇa to guard the door and not allow absolutely anyone to enter. Durvāsa arrived exactly then and demanded to see Rāma immediately. Lakshmaṇa did not allow him in. Durvāsa told him that if he prevented a hungry Brahmin from entering the house, he would give Lakshmaṇa and his family a Ṣāpa. Preferring to be punished by Rāma for disobedience rather than subject the whole family to a Ṣāpa by Durvāsa, Lakshmaṇa went inside to inform Rāma of Durvāsa's arrival. Rāma commanded Lakshmaṇa to leave the city for the crime of disturbing Him while He was

conversing with a Brahmin (*apparently, banishment from the city was code for a death sentence. Lakshmaṇa went away and drowned himself in the Sarayu river*). Durvāsa was thus responsible for ending the Lakshmaṇa incarnation (*Avatāra, of Ṣēshu, the ten-hooded serpent on which Lord Vishṇu reclines and sleeps*). *Rāmāyaṇa*

Duryōdhana I – (*Different from the eldest Kaurava prince*) A king of the lineage of Manu. Once, the river Narmada (*in the Purāṇas, rivers are anthropomorphed into women*), seeing him and falling passionately in love with him, took human female form and had sex with him. A daughter was born to them and was named Sudarṣana. Duryōdhana had Sudarṣana perform chores in the hall where the fire for religious rites was burning. Agni (*the Fire God*), seeing her and falling in love, took the form of a Brahmin and approaching her, asked her to marry him. She told him she could not marry him without permission from her parents. While Duryōdhana was performing a Yāga, Agni approached him and asked him for Sudarṣana's hand in marriage. The king, a Kshatriya (*of princely or warrior caste*), told him he could not let his daughter marry someone from a different caste. Angry at the rejection, Agni disappeared (*i.e., made the sacrificial fire disappear*). Neither the king nor the priests officiating at the Yāga understood what had happened and thought they must have done something wrong in the performance of the Yāga. They prayed to Agni, unaware that he was the Brahmin seeking to marry Sudarṣana. Agni, in his own form, disclosed his desire. Once he realized the Brahmin was Agni himself, the king happily gave his daughter in marriage to him. *Mahā Bhārata*

Duryōdhana II – Son of Upadānavi and her husband Hiraṇyāksha. *Bhāgavata*

Duryōdhana III – Eldest son of Gāndhāri and Dhṛtarāshṭra. He was born with aspects of Kali (*the evil entity symbolizing Kaliyuga, the epoch when Dharma, or righteousness, stands, weakly, on only one leg*). Gāndhāri, who was pregnant, was unable to give birth after a whole year. Impatient, she hit her stomach hard. She then delivered a mass of flesh and was crying bitterly. Sage Vyāsa, on hearing this, arrived and advised that there were one hundred sons in the mass of flesh. He divided it into a hundred and one pieces and instructed that the pieces should be stored securely in butter. Duryōdhana and his siblings eventually emerged from the pieces of flesh. As they grew up, Dhṛtarāshṭra was most fond of Duryōdhana who also had the respect of his brothers (see **Kaurava Princes**).

A daughter, Dussala, also came from the mass of flesh. Dhṛtarāshṭra had another son, Yuyutsu by a Vaiṣya* woman.

When they were very young, the sons of Pānḍu (*younger brother of Dhṛtarāshṭra, who effectively ruled the empire he expanded since Dhṛtarāshṭra was congenitally blind*) used to play and be friends with Duryōdhana and his brothers. However, they did not show the respect and deference for Duryōdhana that his own brothers displayed. They were much stronger, more knowledgable, and righteous than the sons of Dhṛtarāshṭra. When playing water sports, Bhīma, all by himself, could push any ten of his Kaurava cousins under water. Whenever some Kauravas climbed a tree, he would shake the tree hard enough that the roots would start pulling out of the ground. Duryōdhana could not

tolerate such acts of intimidation and decided he would somehow kill Bhīma. To achieve this evil purpose, he was formulating various deceitful plans. Once, while an exhausted Bhīma was fast asleep, Duryōdhana had him bound and thrown into the fast-flowing river Ganga. Another time, he had extremely poisonous snakes let loose on a sleeping Bhīma. Another day, he had Bhīma fed poisoned food. None of these vicious acts hurt Bhīma, however. During an exhibition of archery skills, Duryōdhana tried to humiliate Bhīma by flaunting his skill with a mace (*favourite weapon of both Duryōdhana and Bhīma*), prodding him with the mace. But Bhīma did not let him get close enough. No one among the Kauravas including Duryōdhana had the prowess in archery that Arjuna had. As Duryōdhana was feeling stung by these humiliations, Karṇa, son of a chariot-driver in the court of Dhṛtarāshṭra, stepped forward, criticizing Arjuna and challenging him to a contest of skill. Duryōdhana was delighted that there was someone with the potential to defeat his hated cousins. But Kṛpa (*brother-in-law of Drōṇa and one of the Gurus*) stopped Karṇa, asking him, "Whose son are you? What is your caste?" Karṇa, having been raised by a Sūta (*chariot-drivers, a lower caste than the Kshatriya, or warrior caste*), was considered unqualified to compete with princes. Ashamed at having to reveal his caste, Karṇa remained silent. Duryōdhana then made a snap decision to crown Karṇa ruler of the kingdom of Anga (*as emperor, he had the right to give a kingdom under his control to any one of his choice*) and, in essence, made him a Kshatriya. Duryōdhana took this action not for love of Karṇa, but only with hopes of defeating Arjuna. From that time on, Karṇa and Duryōdhana became firm

allies and inseparable friends. The glue that would forever hold them together was their shared hatred for the Pāṇḍava princes.

Chitrānga, king of Kaḷinga, announced the Swayamvara* of his daughter Ṣubhāngi. Among those who attended it were Jarāsandha, Ṣiṣupāla, and Duryōdhana. During the Swayamvara, Ṣubhāngi ignored Duryōdhana and proceeded past him. Angered by this slight, Duryōdhana forcibly carried her away and put her in his chariot. Because he violated the protocol of Swayamvara and because they were hoping to be chosen, Jarāsandha and some others attacked Duryōdhana. Karṇa, fighting on behalf of Duryōdhana, defeated many of them. Jarāsandha, weakened after a long battle with Karṇa, decided to become his friend and ally.

Drōṇa, who had been the Guru of both the Kaurava and Pāṇḍava princes in the martial arts, asked all the graduating princes for the same Guru Dakshiṇa*, namely to capture and bring to him, his arch-enemy, King Drupada. Duryōdhana went, was defeated in battle by Drupada and returned. Arjuna, on the other hand, easily defeated, bound and brought Drupada to the Guru. Before Duryōdhana recovered from his grief at his failure and Arjuna's triumph, the elders of the Kuru dynasty decided to install Dharmarāja (*the eldest of the Pāṇḍavas*) as the crown prince. This made Duryōdhana extremely unhappy. One of his advisers convinced him that he must kill his enemies. He went, crying, to his father and said, "The people have grown fond of Dharmarāja and if he becomes the crown prince, he will succeed you as the emperor. His descendants will succeed him to the throne. Dhṛtarāshṭra's progeny will be dependent on others for their livelihood." Dhṛtarāshṭra sympathized with his eldest son and

directed the Pāṇḍavas to take up residence in Vāraṇāsi (*present day Benares*). Duryōdhana, as soon as he found out that his father was sending the Pāṇḍavas to Vāraṇāsi, sent one of his trusted aides to go ahead of the Pāṇḍavas and build a house of wax on their route for them to use as a resthouse, with instructions to set fire to the house after the Pāṇḍavas went inside. He was very happy on receiving intelligence that the Pāṇḍavas had died in the wax house as he had planned.

Duryōdhana had learnt the intricacies and finer points of using a mace as a weapon from Balarāma (*Lord Kṛshṇa's older brother*) while Balarāma stayed in Duryōdhana's palace on his return from a visit to King Janaka in his capital, Mithila.

At the Swayamvara of Draupadi, Duryōdhana had attempted to hit the Matsya Yantra (*machine with a rotating fish*) and failed. The fact that someone that looked like a Brahmin had succeeded where he failed and thereby won Draupadi as his wife, humiliated Duryōdhana. Considering it as a personal insult by King Drupada, Duryōdhana and his allies attacked him. Arjuna with his archery skills and Bhīma with his great strength quelled the attack. Duryōdhana learned later that it was the Pāṇḍavas who married Draupadi. He realized that his enemies who he thought had died, not only survived but gained a powerful ally in King Drupada. He also guessed that other kings such as those of dynasties such as Yadu (*of which Lord Kṛshṇa Himself was the leader*), Vṛshṭi, and Bhōja would also become allies of the Pāṇḍavas, rendering them practically invincible. Reinforced in his opinion that the only path to his objective made killing the Pāṇḍavas his first imperative, he approached his father again and choking with grief, said, "Uncle

Vidura, who is partial to the Pāṇḍavas, is always at your side, supporting them against us. I have not had any opportunities to present our case to you. Is this how you love your own children? Please think of a way to deceive the Pāṇḍavas. (*Even though he was the emperor, Dhṛtarāshṭra could not just disenfranchise his brother's sons; the elders and the people would not allow a flagrant violation of justice and ethics.*) Consider either creating enmity between the sons of Kunti (*Dharmarāja, Bhīma, and Arjuna*) and those of Mādri (*the twins Nakula and Sahadēva*) or sending beautiful women to seduce the Pāṇḍavas and turning them away from Draupadi (*which would weaken them by turning her father against them*). If we could kill Bhīma using deceit, Karṇa could then kill Arjuna." Dhṛtarāshṭra (*not known for the ability to take prompt or fair decisions*), unable to choose a course of action, consulted the elders. Bhīshma and the other elders tried to convince Duryōdhana that his aims were improper and immoral. Dhṛtarāshṭra could not reject their wise counsel. The elders also advised Dhṛtarāshṭra to invite the Pāṇḍavas to Hastināpura (*the capital of the Kuru empire, thought to be close to present-day city of Delhi*), to which Duryōdhana could not object. Dharmarāja and his brothers were brought to Hastināpura.

After the Pāṇḍavas had stayed for some time in Hastināpura, Dhṛtarāshṭra gave them half the empire and sent them off. The Pāṇḍavas built (*Maya* built it for them*) a new city named Indraprastha for their capital. Dharmarāja invited Duryōdhana among other kings and princes to the Rājasūya Yāga*. Duryōdhana attended the Yāga.

Duryōdhana was wonder-struck at the magnificence of the

palace of the Pāṇḍavas. In one place that he thought was a small pool of water, he raised his clothing while stepping in it and found out it was solid ground. In another spot, he stepped on what looked like solid ground and found out it was a pool of water. Draupadi, who was watching from a terrace, laughed out loud when Duryōdhana stepped in the water. The sight of a woman (*and the wife of his arch-enemies*) laughing at his plight enraged Duryōdhana. Since it was not the time or place to take action, he hid his feelings. He stayed as the guest of the Pāṇḍavas until the Yāga was completed though the wealth the Pāṇḍavas displayed drove him insanely jealous. Returning home, he related his unhappy experience to his uncle Ṣakuni. Ṣakuni consoled him and promised him that he would win the kingdom and wealth of the Pāṇḍavas at gambling and present it to Duryōdhana. Duryōdhana presented Ṣakuni's plan to his father, and threatened that he would die by self-immolation if his father did not support it. Unable to shake his son's determination, Dhṛtarāshṭra invited the Pāṇḍavas to Hastināpura. Duryōdhana then invited Dharmarāja to a session of games of chance (*these, using dice, were popular royal pastimes; Dharmarāja, especially, could never decline an invitation to gambling*). Duryōdhana said that Ṣakuni would play on his behalf but he would back Ṣakuni's wagers. Dharmarāja staked and lost his kingdom, himself, and his brothers. Duryōdhana suggested that Dharmarāja still had Draupadi. Dharmarāja wagered and lost her too (*due to Ṣakuni rigging the game with charmed dice*). Duryōdhana immediately ordered his chariot-driver Prātikāmi to bring Draupadi (*now his slave*) to the Sabha (*court*). When told that she refused to come (*story goes that Draupadi asked the*

messenger whether her husband lost her before losing himself or lost her after losing himself; if the latter, the gamble would have been invalid because having lost himself, he would not have the right to use her for a wager), he sent his younger brother Duṣṣāsana. Duṣṣāsana dragged Draupadi by her hair into the court. Duryōdhana asked Duṣṣāsana to remove her clothing (*she was in her period and wore a single piece of cloth instead of the normal elaborate garments royal ladies would normally wear*). Duṣṣāsana proceeded to do so. However, even after he pulled great lengths of clothing off her, she remained covered. This should have alerted Duryōdhana to the fact that her status as a Pativrata* was protecting her, but in his arrogance and desire for vengeance, he signaled to her to sit on his thigh. The Pāṇḍavas, bound by the rules of the game to which they had agreed, were unable to act against him. In accordance with the terms of the agreement, they left for the forest to serve an exile for twelve years and then a year incognito with the condition that if they were exposed during the incognito year, the whole thirteen-year cycle must be repeated with the same condition.

Duryōdhana continued to devise plans to kill the Pāṇḍavas using poison, fire or water. Karṇa would advise him that those are not manly ways to defeat enemies and argued for war against them instead. While Duryōdhana was scheming to make a war with the Pāṇḍavas possible, Sage Vyāsa came and warned Dhṛtarāshṭra to discourage Duryōdhana from his evil intentions. Sage Maitrēya also visited Duryōdhana and suggested that he should build an alliance with his cousins. Duryōdhana, slapping his thigh, laughed derisively at the Sage's words and said, "Why worry about the

Pānḍavas?" Angered by Duryōdhana's attitude and words, the Sage gave Duryōdhana a Ṣāpa* that his thighs will be shattered by Bhīma. Plans for war were stopped then, but Duryōdhana's mind remained troubled. Concocting a story about how predatory animals were killing the cattle and small animals in the Dwaita forest (*which was not only the forest most Sages prefer for performing Tapas* but also happened to be the Pānḍavas' location at the time*) and that he and his brothers would go and hunt them, Duryōdhana along with Karṇa and an army, went there to humiliate the Pānḍavas. After hunting big game for a while, Duryōdhana was about to bathe in a lake belonging to Gandharvas*. The Gandharvas would not allow him to enter their lake so Duryōdhana attacked them but was captured and bound by them. Bhīma and Arjuna rescued him at Dharmarāja's behest. Humiliated by being rescued by the very people he went to the forest to harm, Duryōdhana prepared to commit suicide by self-immolation. Karṇa dissuaded him by speaking reassuring words (*to the effect that opportunities to fight and kill the Pānḍavas would arise in the future*) and took him back to the city.

Duryōdhana regained his bravado and confidence now that the Pānḍavas were no longer around to bother him. He enjoyed being the sole ruler of the empire. He continued to receive intelligence on their whereabouts and kept looking for ways to destroy them. The elders led by Bhīshma would advise him that it is immoral to plot against his cousins. Karṇa and Ṣakuni often joined him in slandering the Pānḍavas.

Having witnessed the great Rājasūya Yāga performed by Dharmarāja, Duryōdhana wanted to perform such a Yāga as well.

When he consulted the royal priest about it, he was told that it was impossible for him to perform a Rājasūya as long as the invincible Pāṇḍavas were around. Duryōdhana then performed an equivalent Yāga (*that did not involve challenging any other kings*).

He had been sending spies out to find where the Pāṇḍavas were spending their incognito year, hoping to send them back to a twelve year exile in the forest and one year incognito if they were exposed. Learning that they were probably in the city of King Virāṭa, he went with his army there to steal the prime asset of the kingdom, namely the cattle. Their suspicions were confirmed when Arjuna himself arrived, driving Prince Uttara's chariot. Drōṇa warned Duryōdhana that it would be difficult to defeat Arjuna. Duryōdhana asked him to step aside if he did not have the courage to face Arjuna. Duryōdhana battled Arjuna and was defeated. Duryōdhana happily announced that he had recognised one of the Pāṇḍavas while they were all supposed to be incognito and sent word to Dharmarāja that they had failed to remain incognito for a year. Bhīshma and Dharmarāja both informed him that the year was over just before Arjuna showed up. Crestfallen, Duryōdhana returned home.

Once the Pāṇḍavas completed the exile and incognito periods successfully, Lord Kṛshṇa and his older brother Balarāma started looking for ways to return their share of the empire to them. They sent the court priest of King Drupada (*father-in-law of the Pāṇḍavas*) as an emissary to Dhṛtarāshṭra. It began to look as if a war could not be avoided. Duryōdhana had been busy befriending other kings. Realizing that Kṛshṇa would be the key to winning any war against the Pāṇḍavas (*even though Kṛshṇa definitely*

favoured the Pāṇḍavas, he was supposed to remain impartial and support whoever asked for his help first), Duryōdhana went to Kṛshṇa and seeing him asleep, sat behind his head *(his status as crown prince and his pride would not allow him to sit at anyone's feet, even that of Lord Kṛshṇa*). Arjuna, arriving shortly thereafter, sat at Kṛshṇa's feet. Duryōdhana and Arjuna sat silently, ignoring each other. Lord Kṛshṇa "woke up", saw and greeted Arjuna. Duryōdhana then spoke up, said he had arrived before Arjuna and that Kṛshṇa was obligated to respond to his request for help first. Kṛshṇa explained the he saw Arjuna first, but that he would help both of them. He said the choice for the two of them was between Himself (*He vowed not to take up arms and fight, because that would tip the scales without a doubt*) and His army. He suggested that Arjuna should be allowed to choose first, being the younger of the two. Arjuna, of course, chose Kṛshṇa. Duryōdhana was quite happy to take Kṛshṇa's powerful army.

By the time Duryōdhana returned to Hastināpura, Sanjaya (*he was a constant companion of Dhṛtarāshṭra*) was at the court on behalf of Dharmarāja, describing the might of the Pāṇḍavas. Dhṛtarāshṭra, convinced that the Pāṇḍavas will be certain to defeat his sons, advised Duryōdhana to make peace with them. Bhīshma and the other elders gave Duryōdhana the same advice. Duryōdhana rejected the advice of everyone. Sage Vyāsa told Duryōdhana that the Pāṇḍavas will be victorious because Lord Kṛshṇa was on their side (*unlike Lord Rāma who was thought to be human during His life, Kṛshṇa was contemporaneously known to be an incarnation, or Avatāra of Lord Vishṇu*). Even his mother, Gāndhāri, begged him to drop the idea of war and be

friendly with the Pāṇḍavas. Duryōdhana would not listen to any of them. Kṛshṇa Himself arrived at Dhṛtarāshṭra's court as an emissary of the Pāṇḍavas. Duryōdhana invited Kṛshṇa to his residence for dinner but Kṛshṇa told him He would not eat Duryōdhana's ill-begotten food. Duryōdhana, at one point, planned to capture and bind Kṛshṇa Himself. He vowed not to give up to the Pāṇḍavas even as little land as the point of a pin. Kṛshṇa denounced Duryōdhana publicly in the court. War became inevitable. Duryōdhana used various incentives to bring to his side several kings who had been near and dear to the Pāṇḍavas. Learning that King Ṣalya was on his way to come to the aid of the Pāṇḍavas (*he was a brother of Mādri, King Pāṇḍu's younger wife*), Duryōdhana intercepted him, and persuaded him to join the Kaurava side (*Duryōdhana would later have reason to regret having him on his side*).

The deceit that characterized Duryōdhana normally was not evident during the war. Duryōdhana and his allies fought righteously except in killing Abhimanyu. He honoured and humbly requested stalwart warriors such as Bhīshma, Kṛpa and Drōṇa to command his armies. He himself fought valiantly against Bhīma and others. Humiliated at being defeated by Bhīma, he approached Bhīshma and pleaded, "Even the Dēvas could not defeat you. How could you stand by while Bhīma has been playing havoc with our troops?" Bhīshma replied that Kṛshṇa who was Paramēṣwara (*the Supreme Being*) Himself was on the side of the Pāṇḍavas and that Duryōdhana should do himself a favour by making peace with the Pāṇḍavas. Duryōdhana continued to ignore the advice. Bhīshma kept fighting the Pāṇḍavas valiantly (*because of a promise he*

made to his father, in spite of his belief that God supported the Pāṇḍavas and that the Pāṇḍavas' cause was just). Duryōdhana was confident, when starting the war with Bhīshma as the commander-in-chief that he would be victorious, but his confidence was severely shaken when Bhīshma was injured and left the battlefield (see **Amba**). Duryōdhana, calling up reserves of courage, kept the war going with Drōṇa as the new commander. Pleased at being so honoured, Drōṇa asked Duryōdhana to request a boon. Duryōdhana asked him to capture and bring Dharmarāja to him. Duryōdhana told the Guru that further war could be avoided if he can defeat Dharmarāja at games of chance again and impose exile and incognito on them. Duryōdhana was well aware of the monumental difficulty in defeating Arjuna and his forces, but it seemed that the might of the Pāṇḍavas was even greater than he imagined. His forces were suffering defeats and getting weaker. Displeased that even Drōṇa has not been able to subdue the Pāṇḍavas' forces, he accused his Guru of partiality toward the Pāṇḍavas. Stung by the accusation of treason, Drōṇa plunged into the battle recklessly with no regard to his safety and perished (*not without deceit by the Pāṇḍavas, abetted by Kṛshṇa*). Then the next commander, his close friend, Karṇa (*son of Sūrya, the Sun God*) who was born with a suit of armor and earrings (*that were his body parts*), died in battle. King Ṣalya, the next commander, was killed by Dharmarāja. Duryōdhana was again advised to cease hostilities and make peace. Duryōdhana's pride would not allow him to seek to save his life by begging his enemies for protection. He left the battlefield and hid in a lake. The remaining warriors on his side, including Kṛpa, Aṣvatthāma and Kṛtavarma visited him

and consoled him with promises to kill his enemies. The Pāṇḍavas learned where Duryōdhana was hiding, went there and hurled insults at him. Duryōdhana sorrowfully said, "I am not hiding because of fear of you, Dharmarāja, or your allies. I am mourning the death of so many of my brave allies. You will do well to rest awhile as well." The Pāṇḍavas did not leave him alone so eventually he emerged from hiding, provoked to fight. Bhīma agreed to face him in a mace-fight. During the fight, Bhīma killed Duryōdhana by hitting him in the thighs, against the well-known rules of combat. Duryōdhana's son, Lakshmaṇa was also killed in the war. *Mahā Bhārata*

Dūshaṇa – Brother of Khara, Rāvaṇa's cousin (*son of his mother's younger sister*). *Rāmāyaṇa*

Dushṭa Buddhi – (*Sanskrit for "whose thoughts are evil"*) Minister to the king of a country named Kuntala. He had a son named Madana and a daughter named Vishaya. The king of Kuntala had a daughter named Champakamāla but no male heir. Dushṭa Buddhi planned to get Champakamāla married to his son and have his son succeed to the throne. One day, Dushṭa Buddhi, on his way to the royal palace, saw a little boy and heard some Brahmins comment that the boy had the attributes of royal lineage. Concerned that the boy might constitute a threat to his plans, he ordered his servants to kill the boy. The servants, unable to comply with the evil order, cut off the boy's sixth toe, left him in the forest and presented the finger to Dushṭa Buddhi as evidence that they had done the deed. After some years, on a visit to the Sabha (*court*) of a neighbouring king named Kuḷindaka, Dushṭa Buddhi saw a boy and remembering having seen him in the past, asked

Kuḷindaka who the boy was. Kuḷindaka replied that he saw the boy, with a toe missing, crying in the forest and adopted him as his son with the name Chandrahāsa. Realizing that his earlier attempt to kill the boy had failed, he formulated a new plot to kill Chandrahāsa. He wrote a letter to his son Madana asking him to give Visha (*poison*) to the bearer of the letter and asked Chandrahāsa to take it and deliver it to his son. Chandrahāsa took the letter and went to Kuntala. Tired from the journey, he rested in a garden there. The princess of the realm, Champakamāla and Vishaya, daughter of the minister, happened to be strolling in the garden at the time. They were both aroused on seeing the sleeping Chandrahāsa. Vishaya, noticing the letter he was carrying, took it from the sleeping Chandrahāsa and read it. When she saw that her father asked her brother to give Visha to Chandrahāsa, she wondered why such a handsome boy was to be killed, and having fallen in love with Chandrahāsa, altered Visha to Vishaya and replaced the letter and went home. Chandrahāsa woke up soon thereafter and took the letter and delivered it to Madana. Seeing his father's direction to give Vishaya to the bearer of the letter, he performed his sister's marriage with Chandrahāsa. Returning home the next day, Dushṭa Buddhi was upset that Chandrahāsa had become his son-in-law. Undeterred, he continued to plan to kill Chandrahāsa. He said to Chandrahāsa, "According to our tradition, a newly married man must go to the temple of Chanḍika, alone." Chandrahāsa said he would do so the next day. In the meantime, Dushṭa Buddhi summoned some assassins and directed them to kill any man who goes alone to the temple of Chanḍika the next day. The next day, Chandrahāsa was about to go to the temple. Just

then, the king sent Chandrahāsa a message to come visit him. Madana, who happened to be there, told Chandrahāsa to go to the king and that he would go to the temple. Madana went to the temple where the assassins, seeing a lone man, killed him. The king, when Chandrahāsa came in response to his message, gave his daughter in marriage to Chandrahāsa. On learning that his son had been killed (*by his own plot that went awry*) and that the king had given his daughter in marriage to Chandrahāsa, Dushṭa Buddhi died of a broken heart. Chandrahāsa, learning of the deaths of Madana and Dushṭa Buddhi, went to the temple, and prayed to Chanḍika. Chanḍika appeared and per Chandrahāsa's request, revived both Madana and Dushṭa Buddhi. *Jaimini Bhārata*

Dushṭa Chatushṭaya – (*Sanskrit for 'the evil foursome'*) Collective name for the brothers Duryōdhana and Duṣṣāsana, their uncle Ṣakuni, and best friend Karṇa. *Mahā Bhārata*

Dushyanta – A king. Son of Ilala (*also known as Raibhya*) and his wife Rathantari. One day, while out hunting, he got very tired. Upon learning that the Āṣram of Sage Kaṇva was nearby, he went there to visit him. Sage Kaṇva was not in his Āṣram but Dushyanta saw Ṣakuntala (*beautiful daughter of Sage Viṣvāmitra and the Apsara* Mēnaka, growing up under Sage Kaṇva's guardianship*). Wonderstruck by her youthful beauty, he expressed a desire to marry her. She told him that she is not free to marry on her own but has to be given in marriage by her guardian Sage Kaṇva. Dushyanta persuaded her that as a Kshatriya, he is allowed to marry in the Gāndharva* fashion and married her that way, promising that he will make her son the successor to his throne. He left her in the Āṣram (*after lovemaking*) and went back to his

capital, promising to send for her soon. Once he was back to the city, he forgot her (see **Ṣakuntala**). After a long time, Ṣakuntala, accompanied by her son Bharata and a few of Sage Kaṇva's disciples, went to Dushyanta and asked him to accept her and their son. Dushyanta, saying "I do not know you. Do not accuse me of being your boy's father. Please go away." Then, Ākāṣavāṇi* was heard saying "O! King! She is your wife. This boy is your son. Accept them." Dushyanta then picked up Bharata in his arms and embracing Ṣakuntala, said "I rejected you at first to avoid being thought of as an adulterer by the world. I was waiting for Ākāṣavāṇi to let every one know the facts." When Bharata came of age, he was crowned as the king. *Mahā Bhārata*

Dussala - Daughter of Gāndhāri and Dhṛtarāshṭra. Wife of Saindhava. Her grandsons captured the sacrificial horse of Dharmarāja's Aṣvamēdha Yāga*. Arjuna defeated them and was about to kill them. Dussala approached Arjuna and beseeched him to spare their lives because they were the sons of his nephew. Arjuna let them live. *Mahā Bhārata*

Duṣṣāsana – Son of Gāndhāri and Dhṛtarāshṭra. Favourite younger brother and constant companion of Duryōdhana. He was fully involved together with Duryōdhana in all the evil plots. He was not his older brother's equal either in physical strength or intelligence. Duryōdhana did not involve him in the planning of his activities the way the Pāṇḍavas always discussed all decisions as a group. After Dharmarāja wagered and lost Draupadi, Duryōdhana immediately ordered his chariot-driver, Prātikāmi to bring Draupadi (*now his slave*) to the Sabha (*court*). When told that she refused to come (*story goes that Draupadi asked the*

messenger whether her husband lost her before losing himself or lost her after losing himself because if the latter, the bet would have been invalid because having lost himself, he would not have the right to use her for a bet), he sent his younger brother Duṣṣāsana. Duṣṣāsana, without any consideration that she was a woman or that she was the wife of his cousins, dragged her by her hair into the court. Duryōdhana asked Duṣṣāsana to remove Draupadi's clothing (*she was in her period and wore a single piece of cloth instead of the normal elaborate garments royal ladies would normally wear*). Duṣṣāsana proceeded to do so, however, even after he pulled great lengths of clothing off her, she remained covered. Stung by Duṣṣāsana's terrible insult, Draupadi took a vow that she will put her hair up only after using Duṣṣāsana's blood as hair-dressing. Bhīma vowed that he will split Duṣṣāsana's heart and drink the blood from it. These vows were not taken seriously by either Duryōdhana or Duṣṣāsana. While the Pāṇḍavas were spending a year incognito, Duryōdhana was busy devising plans to expose them so that they could be sent away for thirteen more years. Duṣṣāsana suggested that it was unnecessary to look for them, confident that they would have died during the exile in the forest. His suggestion was totally ignored by Duryōdhana and his advisers. During the war, Duṣṣāsana first did battle against Abhimanyu, was defeated and ran from the battlefield. Afterwards, he fought Sātyaki (*constant companion of Kṛshṇa*), and was beaten. Then he was injured and lost consciousness while fighting Sahadēva. Bhīma killed him, tore open his chest, drank some of his blood and gave some of it to Draupadi to apply to her hair before she tied it up. *Mahā Bhārata*

Dvita – A Brahmin. He had brothers named Ēkata and Trita. The three of them obtained some cows as Dakshiṇa (*gifts*) from a king and were going home. Ēkata and Dvita planned to deceive Trita and steal his cows. On the way, these two were afraid of an attack by a wolf. Dvita changed his route to avoid the wolf, and fell into a dry well. Deciding that his sin can be washed away only by drinking Sōma (*special liquid associated with the performance of a Yāga*), he willed all the required ingredients for a Yāga into existence by sheer mental power. He performed a Yāga, which pleased the Dēvas because they received their portions of Havya*. They asked Dvita to choose a boon from them and per his request, they made the well fill with the waters of the Sarasvati river. He obtained a boon from them that sipping the water from the well will be equivalent to drinking Sōma. The well became a pilgrimage site, known as Chamasōdbhēdana. *Mahā Bhārata*

Dvivida – A Vānara*. His brother was Mainda, a counselor in the Sabha (*court*) of Sugrīva.

He fought on the side of Lord Rāma in the war between Rāma and the Asura* Rāvaṇa. He was a mighty warrior and killed many Asuras. *Rāmāyaṇa*

He was an ally of the Asura Naraka. Angry with Lord Kṛshṇa for killing Naraka, he was destroying populated towns. Balarāma responded by attacking him with his Hala (*his signature weapon, a plough*) and killed him. *Mahā Bhārata*

Dwādaṣādityas – (*Sanskrit for "The Twelve Sūryas or Suns*) There is only one Sūrya (*the Sun God*), who is an aspect of Lord Vishṇu. However, Sages have described Him in a variety of ways at different times, in different places, based on His different

actions.

Sūrya and his retinue are known by different names in each of the twelve lunar months.

The following are the names and retinue of the Dwāṣādityas each month:

Chaitra – Name: Dhāta; Retinue: Kṛtasthali, Hēti, Vāsuki, Rathakṛt, Pulastya, Tumbura

Vaiṣākha – Name: Aryama; Retinue: Pulaha, Bhōja, Prahēli, Punjakasthali, Nārada, Kanjanīra

Jyēshṭha – Name: Mitra; Retinue: Atri, Paurushēya, Takshaka, Mēnaka, Hāhā, Rathasvana

Āshāḍha – Name: Varuṇa; Retinue: Vasishṭha, Rambha, Sahajanya, Huhu, Ṣukra, Chitrasvana

Ṣrāvaṇa – Name: Indra; Retinue: Viṣvāvasu, Ṣrōta, Ēlāputra, Angirasa, Pramlōchi, Charma

Bhādrapada – Name: Vivasvanta; Retinue: Ugrasēna, Vyāghra, Asāraṇa, Bhṛgu, Anumlōja, Ṣankhapāla

Āṣvayuja – Name: Tvashṭa; Retinue: Kambaḷāṣva, Tilōttama, Brahmōpēta, Ṣatajit, Dhṛtarāshṭra, Ishambhara

Kārtīka – Name: Vishṇu; Retinue: Aṣvaratha, Rambha, Sūryavarchasa, Satyajit, Viṣvāmitra, Maghōpēta

Mārgaṣira – Name: Taryama; Retinue: Kaṣyapa, Tārkshya, Ṛtasēna, Ūrvaṣi, Vidyucchatu, Mahaṣankha

Pushya – Name: Bhaga; Retinue: Spūrja, Arishṭanēmi, Ūrṇa, Āyu, Karkōṭaka, Pūrvajitti

Māgha – Name: Pūsha; Retinue: Dhananjaya, Vāta, Sushēṇa, Suruchi, Ghṛtāchi, Gautama

Phālguṇa – Name: Kratu; Retinue: Varyana, Bharadvāja,

Parjanya, Sēnajit, Viṣva, Airāvata *Mahā Bhārata*

Dwaitavana – A forest. The Pānḍavas dwelt there for sometime during their exile. *Mahā Bhārata*

Dwāraka – Lord Kṛshṇa's city. After He defeated Jarāsandha, an Asura* named Kālayavana, instigated by Sage Nārada, attacked Mathura (*Kamsa's city, where Kṛshṇa settled after He killed Kamsa and released His parents as well as Kamsa's father*) with a vast army. Kālayavana was a mighty warrior. While Kṛshṇa was fighting him, He was concerned by the possibility that Jarāsandha might take advantage of His absence to attack and kill His people. So He requested Viṣvakarma* to build a city for Him in the middle of the ocean.

Viṣvakarma agreed to build a fine city if Samudra (*the Ocean God*) gave him the required space. Lord Kṛshṇa prayed to Samudra, who gave up a twelve Yōjanas (*a Yōjana is approximately eight miles*) wide strip of land. Viṣvakarma built the city of Dwāraka on it. *Hari Vamṣa*

The Dikpatis* presented much wealth to the city. Indra* presented the divine tree named Pārijāta and an auditorium named Sudharma. Varuṇa (*the Rain God*) presented horses which ran as fast as thoughts. Kubēra (*God of Wealth*) gave many treasures. Balarāma (*Kṛshṇa's older brother*) moved the entire population of Mathura to the new city. *Bhāgavata*

Dyuma – One of King Sālva's Ministers. When he and the other ministers of Sālva were fighting Yadu warriors in Dwāraka, he killed one of the sons of Pradyumna (*son of Lord Kṛshṇa*). Pradyumna killed him. *Bhāgavata*

Dyumatsēna I – King of country named Sāḷva. He had become blind, lost his kingdom and was living in the forest like a Muni. Sāvitri fell in love with his son Satyavanta and married him. As a result of boons she received from Yama (See **Sāvitri** or **Satyavanta**), Dyumatsēna regained his sight and his kingdom. *Bhāgavata*

Dyumatsēna II – Curator of Ṣalya's museum of pictures. He was killed by Dharmarāja. *Mahā Bhārata*

Dyutimanta I – Son of Prāṇa, the older brother of Mārkanḍēya's father. He had a son named Svanavāta. *Brahmānḍa Purāṇa*

Dyutimanta II – Son of Priyavrata. King of Krauncha Dwīpa (*island*). He had sons named Kuṣala, Manōmaga, Ushṇa, Pāvana, Andhakāra, Muni, and Dundubhi. *Brahmānḍa Purāṇa*

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Ēkachakrapura – A city. An Asura* named Bakāsura was harassing the city's population. To avoid annihilation by him, the people agreed to send one person each day to be his meal. After escaping being burnt to death in the wax house (*one of Duryōdhana's plots to kill them*), the Pānḍavas entered the city, disguised as Brahmins. Bhīma (*second oldest of the Pānḍavas*) killed Bakāsura here. *Mahā Bhārata*

Ēkādaṣa Rudras – Sanaka, Sanandana and their brothers (*whom Lord Brahma had commanded to propagate the human species*), foreswore sex and took vows of celibacy. Creation was stopped in its tracks. Brahma, angry that the population was not growing, and with the intent to resume creation, took both female and male forms Himself. He then separated His form into two. The male then divided into Ēkādaṣa (*eleven*) men. They were the Ēkādaṣa Rudras. *Mārkanḍēya Purāṇa*

They were born to Surabhi by Mārtānḍa. Their names were Ajapāda, Ahirbudna, Tryambaka, Vṛshākapi, Ṣambhu, Japāli, Raivata, Hara, Bahurūpa, Ugra, and Viṣvarūpa. *Mahā Bhārata*

Lord Brahma created Mānasa Putras (*mind-born sons*) and directed them to procreate. They refused and went their way. When Brahma became angry, Ēkādaṣa Rudras were born from His brow.

Their names were Mahat, Mahātma, Matimanta, Bhīshaṇa, Bhayankara, Ṛtadhwaja, Ūrdhvakēṣa, Pingaḷāksha, Ruchi, Ṣuchi, and Kālāgni Rudra. *Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa*

Ēkalavya I – Commander of the army of Jarāsandha (*an evil king who was an enemy of Lord Kṛshṇa*). When Kṛshṇa and Balarāma (*His older brother*) were on the Gōmanta mountain, he placed dry leaves all around the mountain and set fire to them. Kṛshṇa and Balarāma were able to escape unharmed. *Bhāgavata*

Ēkalavya II – Chief of an aboriginal tribe named Nishāda. He went to war against Dwāraka (*Kṛshṇa's capital*) on behalf of Paundraka Vāsudēva (*another enemy of Lord Kṛshṇa*). *Uttara Harivamṣa*

Ēkalavya III – Son of a tribal chief named Hiraṇyadhanva. Having heard of the famous Drōṇa (*Guru of Kaurava and Pānḍava princes*), he approached the great Guru hoping to learn archery from him. But Drōṇa rejected him as a disciple because of his Nishāda (*non-Aryan, tribal, hunters, fishermen, robbers*) origin. Taking his leave of Drōṇa, he went back to the forest, made a clay statue of Drōṇa, and considering the statue as a Guru, learnt archery by his own effort. Once, the Kauravas and Pānḍavas came for a hunt to the forest where Ēkalavya lived. When their dog saw Ēkalavya and started barking, Ēkalavya shot an arrow into the dog. The Pānḍavas, coming on the scene on hearing the dog's cries, were amazed at his skill at archery. They went back and informed Drōṇa that there was an archer in the forest who was better than Arjuna. Drōṇa went to the forest to see Ēkalavya for himself. Ēkalavya greeted him with respect and devotion and showed him

how he learnt archery with Drōṇa as a virtual Guru. Drōṇa then asked Ēkalavya for Guru Dakshiṇa*. Ēkalavya said, "My body and all my possessions are yours. I will give whatever you desire." Drōṇa asked for the right thumb of Ēkalavya. Ēkalavya promptly cut off his right thumb and gave it to Drōṇa, knowing that his days as an archer are over. (*Drōṇa had a personal and ulterior motive for removing any credible rivals to Arjuna in archery, especially from a caste lower than the warrior or Kshatriya caste. He needed a great archer of royal lineage to avenge the insult he suffered from his boyhood friend and fellow disciple, King Drupada*) *Mahā Bhārata*

Ēkapāda – A Brahmin. His wife was Sujāta. He made his disciples constantly chant the Vēdas. His wife became pregnant a long time after marriage. Her son, while still in his mother's womb, said to his father, "Why are you making them chant constantly, without food or sleep? Their health is being ruined." Annoyed, the father said, "Since you spoke in a Vakra (*twisted or opposition*) manner to learning, I am giving you a Ṣāpa* that you shall be Ashṭāvakra (*with eight deformities*)." When his wife was ready to give birth, there were no rice, ghee (*clarified butter*) or sesame seeds in the house. Ēkapāda went out to obtain some. He went to King Janaka's Sabha (*court*) and on a challenge, started an argument with Vandi, son of Varuṇa (*the Rain God*). He lost and was put under water. While he was away, his son Ashṭāvakra was born. Ashṭāvakra became a learned man, went to King Janaka's court, defeated Vandi in argument and brought his father back. *Mahā Bhārata*

Ēkaparṇa – Daughter of Mēnaka (*granddaughter of Daksha reborn as a mortal woman due to a Ṣāpa*; not the famous*

*Apsara**) and Himavanta (*in the Purāṇas, mountains are anthropomorphed into men*). She performed Tapas* for many years while starving herself. She married Asita and had a son named Dēvala. *Hari Vamṣa*

Ēkapāṭala – Daughter of Mēnaka (*granddaughter of Daksha reborn as a mortal woman due to a Ṣāpa*; not the famous Apsara**) and Himavanta (*in the Purāṇas, mountains are anthropomorphed into men*). She performed Tapas* for many years and married a Muni named Jaigīsha. Ṣankha and Likhita were their sons. *Hari Vamṣa*

Ēkata, Dvita, and Trita – Brothers. Sons of Prajāpati. Once, while Bṛhaspati (*Guru of the Dēvas*) was officiating at a Yāga being performed by Uparicharavasu, Lord Vishṇu Himself came and received the Havya*. No one present could see Him, though. Bṛhaspati was angered by this. These three brothers pacified him by explaining that Lord Vishṇu (*who resides on an island called Swētadwīpa*) appears to devotees only when they are alone. *Mahā Bhārata*

Ēkāvaḷi – Daughter born to a king named Rabhya, who was childless for a long time. Her father often told her that he would give her in marriage to Hayahaya (See **Ēkavīra**). An Asura* named Kālakētu abducted her, held her prisoner in Pātāḷa (*netherworld*), and tried to force her to marry him. She rejected the Asura's advances, remembering that her father intended her to marry Hayahaya. Her friend and companion, Yaṣōmati prayed to Dēvi (*the Supreme Being*) and was able to bring Hayahaya over to the netherworld. Hayahaya killed Kālakētu and married Ēkāvaḷi.

Dēvī Bhāgavata

Ēkavīra – Another name for Hayahaya (*the son born to Lord Vishṇu and His Consort Lakshmi when they made love while in the form of horses*). Harivarma raised him and gave him the name Ēkavīra. *Bhāgavata*

Ēlāputra – Son of Kadruva. A Nāga*. He overheard a conversation between Brahma and the Dēvas regarding his mother's Ṣāpa* that her children would be burnt to death in a Yāga to be performed by the Emperor Janamējaya (*great-grandson of Arjuna*). He informed Vāsuki (*one of the most famous Nāgas, he was used as the rope in the churning of the Ocean of Milk*) and the others who were worried about the Ṣāpa that he also heard that Āstīka would stop Janamējaya from performing the serpent sacrifice Yāga. *Mahā Bhārata*

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Gadādhara – A place of pilgrimage. A (*articulate*) bird named Chicchuka was absolved from the sin of killing a Brahmin (*while Chicchuka was human*) by bathing here. *Brahma Purāṇa*

Gādhi I – A king. Son of Kuṣanābha (*also known as Kuṣāmba*). He had a daughter named Satyavati. Once, the Muni Ṛchīka went to Gādhi and asked for his daughter Satyavati's hand in marriage. The king told him that he could marry the princess if he brought a thousand horses each with one blue ear and an all-white body, as bride-price. Ṛchīka prayed to Varuṇa (*the Rain God*), who told him that such horses will be found wherever Ṛchīka wished them to be. Ṛchīka mentally pictured them near a kingdom named Kanyākubja, north of the river Ganga. The horses appeared there. Ṛchīka gave King Gādhi the horses he desired and married his daughter Satyavati. Gādhi had no sons. Satyavati requested Ṛchīka to use his spiritual power to enable her parents to beget a son. Viṣvāmitra was then born as Gādhi's son. *Bhāgavata*

Gādhi II – Son of Kuṣika. *Mahā Bhārata*

Gahva – One of the brothers of Kamsa (*evil uncle of Lord Kṛshṇa*). He fought against Kṛshṇa and Balarāma when Kamsa tried to kill them. Balarāma killed him. *Bhāgavata*

Gaja – Son of the Asura* Mahisha. Once, Gaja (*Gaja means elephant in Sanskrit. Asuras, with their shape-shifting ability, often took animal as well as inanimate forms*) was indulging in activities that were displeasing to the Dēvas. The Dēvas complained about him to Ṣiva. As Ṣiva approached Gaja to punish him, the Asura said "O Lord! I acted this way so that I could die at your hands. Please kill me and wear my hide. Grant me this boon." Ṣiva fulfilled Gaja's wish. Ṣiva acquired the name Kṛttivāsa (*Kṛtti means 'animal hide', Vāsa means 'abode'*) as a result. *Ṣiva Purāṇa*

Gajēndra – (*Sanskrit for Lord of Elephants*) An (*articulate*) elephant. One day, Gajēndra and other elephants under his leadership, went to a lake to slake their thirst. An alligator caught one of Gajēndra's legs and however hard he tried, he could not break the alligator's grip. Gajēndra kept trying to pull the alligator out of the lake but the alligator kept pulling Gajēndra into the water. After the battle went on for several years, the elephant was unable to get free of the alligator. Gajēndra was losing his strength and his courage. He then prayed to Lord Vishṇu. Hearing the pitiful cries of Gajēndra, Vishṇu, who was in the company of His Consort Lakshmi, hurriedly left Her and came running to Gajēndra even forgetting to take His signature weapon, the Chakra*, along. The Chakra followed Him. Vishnu, using the Chakra, killed the alligator and rescued Gajēndra.

In a previous life, Gajēndra was King Indradyumna of a country in southern India. Once, when Sage Agastya came to visit him, he failed to rise to greet the Sage. Agastya gave him a Ṣāpa* that he would become an elephant. The alligator was a Gandharva* named

Huhu who became one due to a Ṣāpa by Dēvala. *Bhāgavata*

Gālava I – Son of Sage Viṣvāmitra. Once, during a severe famine, as the family was starving, Viṣvāmitra (*in one version, Viṣvāmitra was away and it was his wife*) tied a rope around the neck of their middle son, took him from street to street, crying loudly "Will anyone take this boy and give me a hundred cows?" Satyavrata (*original name of Triṣanku for whom Viṣvāmitra created an alternative heaven at a later time*) promised he would support the family and had the boy released from the noose. The son came to be known as Gālava because a noose was placed around his Gaḷa (*neck*). *Mahā Bhārata*

Gālava II – Son of a Muni. Gālava received his education from Viṣvāmitra. He requested Viṣvāmitra to tell him what he would like as Guru Dakshiṇa*. Viṣvāmitra said he did not want anything. Sensing that the stubborn disciple would not take no for an answer, Viṣvāmitra asked for eight hundred horses that were white all over except for one blue ear. Gālava searched high and low and but was not successful. Gālava then asked for help from his friend Garutmanta*. The two of them went on a search for such horses. Garutmanta took Gālava to his friend Yayāti, king of the city of Pratishṭhāna. The king said he had no such horses but asked them to take his daughter Mādhavi and obtain the horses by offering her to some king. Mādhavi told Gālava that she had a boon that she will remain a virgin even after bearing a child. She also told him that after bearing a child by a king who gives him some horses in return for her, she will leave that king and return to Gālava. In this manner, they first went to King Ikshvāku who took her and gave Gālava two hundred horses of the type specified. After he had a

son by Mādhavi, Ikshvāku returned her to Gālava. In a similar manner, Gālava obtained two hundred horses each from King Divōdās and from King Auṣīnara. Because there was no possibility of obtaining any more horses, Garutmanta advised Gālava to request Viṣvāmitra to accept the six hundred horses and Yayāti's daughter Mādhavi in lieu of eight hundred horses. Viṣvāmitra accepted the horses and Mādhavi as fulfillment of his desired Guru Dakshiṇa. He and Mādhavi had a son named Ashṭaka. *Hari Vamṣa; Mahā Bhārata*

Gālava III – A Muni. While he was performing Tapas*, an Asura* named Pātāḷakētu was constantly harassing him, coming in different disguises. Even though he had the spiritual power to kill the Asura, he was not willing to expend it. He looked up at the sky and just then, a horse appeared before him. Ākāṣavāṇi* said "O! Great Muni! Sūrya (*the Sun God*) gave you this horse. It can go everywhere. Take it and give it to the son of Ṣatrujit. He can kill the Asura. Gālava accordingly gave the horse to Ṛtadhwaja (*also known as Kuvalayāṣva after the horse he received*). Gālava's son was Bhadraṣīla. *Mārkanḍēya Purāṇa*

Gānabandhu – An (*articulate*) owl. In a previous life, it was a king named Bhuvanēṣa. The owl was eating corpses on a mountain named Mānasōttara. A Brahmin named Haramitra saw the owl and remembering its previous life, asked "Why have you become like this?" The owl replied "When I was a king, Haramitra would constantly worship Vishṇu and sing His praises. Hearing this, I went to him and demanded that he sing about my fame. When he refused, I threw away his idols and harassed him. I have become like this on account of that sin. I will next be born as a dog."

Haramitra felt bad that all these bad things happened to Bhuvanēṣa on his account and said "I am not angry with you. Let no harm come to you due to me. You will not have to take birth as a dog. I will teach you music. Sing the praises of Vishṇu from now on." The owl followed Haramitra's advice. Sage Nārada came to him, on the direction of Vishṇu, to learn music. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Ganḍaki river – A river that flows south of the Himalaya mountain. It was the Goddess Tulasi that became this river due to a boon by Lord Ṣiva. It was in this river that the sacred stones known as Sālagrāmas were formed. *Ṣiva Purāṇa*

When Lord Ṣiva made love to Jaganmōhini (*female form of Lord Vishṇu, assumed for the purpose of distracting the Asuras* and denying them a share of Amṛtam**), perspiration covered Her body due to the exertion of lovemaking. The sweat formed became the Ganḍaki River. Diamond-studded insects grew in the River. The sacred stones known as Sālagrāmas emerged from these insects. *Skānda Purāṇa*

Gāndhāri I – One of the wives of Ajamīḍha. Kaikēyi (*different from Lord Rāma's aunt*) and Ṛksha were his other wives. *Mahā Bhārata*

Gāndhāri II – Daughter of King Subala of the country of Gāndhāra. Her brother was Ṣakuni. Impressed by what she heard of the attributes and qualities of Dhṛtarāshṭra, she vowed that she will not marry anyone else. Her father accordingly gave her in marriage to Dhṛtarāshṭra. Because her husband was congenitally blind, she took to wearing a dark blindfold which did not let any light enter her eyes. She became pregnant due to a boon by Sage

Vyāsa (*father of Dhṛtarāshṭra, Pānḍu and Vidura*) but did not give birth even a year later. By then Kunti (*wife of Dhṛtarāshṭra's younger brother Pānḍu*) already gave birth to a son Dharmarāja (*the fact that he was the eldest in the next generation, even though his father was younger than Dhṛtarāshṭra was the reason the Pānḍavas had any claim to the kingdom. There would have been no question about the succession to the throne if Dhṛtarāshṭra had a son before Pānḍu did*). Frustrated that har son had not been born yet, she beat her stomach. A chunk of flesh came from her stomach. Vyāsa, learning of this development, came and told her that a hundred sons and one daughter will emerge from that mass and ordered that the flesh should be divided into a hundred and one pieces which should be kept separate from each other and kept under observation. Duryōdhana, his ninety nine brothers and sister Dussala were born from those pieces of flesh. Watching her sons developing a fierce enmity with their cousins, the Pānḍavas, she constantly advised them that it was not a good thing. She was saddened by the ill-treatment of Draupadi by Duryōdhana and Duṣṣāsana and admonished them, but they ignored her. All her sons died in the Mahā Bhārata war. When Dharmarāja came to visit her and console her after the war, she was about to give him a Ṣāpa*. She even went to the battlefield and saw the corpses of her sons. She cried bitterly and considering Kṛshṇa to be responsible for the death of all of them, gave Him a Ṣāpa that His people will perish in a similar manner. Vyāsa consoled Dhṛtarāshṭra and Gāndhāri in their immense grief. Using his spiritual power, he let them see all their dead relatives. Gāndhāri accompanied her husband when he left for the forest, at

the invitation of Vyāsa. Sanjaya (*Dhṛtarāshṭra's most trusted friend and helper*) went with them to attend to their needs. The Pānḍavas went to the forest to visit them but were told to return to the city. A wildfire engulfed the forest where they were staying. Dhṛtarāshṭra and Gāndhāri ordered Sanjaya to escape and died facing east.

In her previous life, Gāndhāri was a Dēva woman named Mati. *Mahā Bhārata*

Gandha Mādana mountain – A mountain revered by the Dēvas and Siddhas (*semi-divine beings with special magical powers*). *Mahā Bhārata*

Gandharvas – Once, Asuras*, born from the hips of Lord Brahma, wished to copulate with Him. Brahma went to Lord Vishṇu and sought His protection from the Asuras. On Vishṇu's advice, Brahma abandoned His body. A beautiful woman, Sandhya, arose from the abandoned body. The Asuras, mad with lust, swarmed around her. Pleased to be rid of them, Brahma rubbed His hand. Gandharvas* and Apsaras* were then born. *Bhāgavata*

Gāndini – Daughter of the king of Kāṣi*. Wife of Ṣvaphalka. When her mother was pregnant with her, her gestation lasted more than twelve years. The Brahmins in his Sabha (*court*) advised that she will probably give birth if Ṣvaphalka was brought to the city. Ṣvaphalka was brought to Kāṣi. The king, having learnt that the baby in his wife's womb was female, said to her "Girl! Stop hurting your mother and be born"; speaking from the womb, the baby answered "I will come out if you promise to give gifts of

cows to Brahmins every day." The king agreed and the girl emerged from the womb and was named Gāndini. She was given in marriage to Ṣvaphalka. Their son was Akrūra. *Hari Vamṣa*

Gāṇḍīva – A Divine bow. It was made by Lord Brahma, who kept it for one thousand years, then Prajāpati kept it for forty six thousand years, Indra* for five hundred years, and Varuṇa (*the God of Rain*) for several hundred years. Agni (*the God of Fire*) obtained it from Varuṇa. Agni gave it to Arjuna to use against Indra who was defending the Khāṇḍava forest from Agni who needed to consume it (see **Agni**). It was so powerful that any weapon that came in contact with it instantly burned to ashes. It was Arjuna's primary weapon until he and his brothers ascended to heaven. *Mahā Bhārata*

Ganga – In a previous life, she was the daughter of Kardama's daughter Kaḷa and her husband Marīchi. Her name then was Pūrṇima. In her next life, she was born as Ganga, from the water used to wash Lord Vishṇu's feet. She had a daughter named Dēvakulya and a son named Viraja. *Bhāgavata*

When Vāmana (*the fifth and first human incarnation of Lord Vishṇu*) expanded His body tremendously and covered the heaven (*sky*) with one foot, Brahma washed Vishṇu's (in the *form of Vāmana*) foot with water from His Kamanḍala*. That water flowed as the heavenly river Ganga. In this manner, Ganga was born from Lord Vishṇu's foot.

Once upon a time, Ganga, Lakshmi, and Sarasvati were Lord Vishṇu's wives. Once, while all three were together with their husband, Ganga was staring at Vishṇu without blinking. Vishṇu smiled at her and kissed her. Sarasvati could not bear to see this.

She spoke harshly to Ganga, in anger and the two of them had an argument. Ganga gave Sarasvati a Ṣāpa* that she would become a river. Sarasvati gave Ganga a counter-Ṣāpa that she would become a river as well. Vishṇu, noticing that Lakshmi was observing the fighting between Ganga and Sarasvati and did not intervene, gave Lakshmi a Ṣāpa that she would be born in the house of Dharmadhwaja, as an Ayōnija (*without passing through a birth canal*).

As Ganga was flowing as water in the cowherds' village, Kṛshṇa felt lust for her. Rādha, learning of His infatuation, scolded Him. Afraid of her, Ganga sought refuge at Vishṇu's feet. The world was without water. Led by Lord Brahma, the Dēvas went to Vishṇu and requested Him to relieve Ganga of her fear and allow them to release her back to the world. Vishṇu released Ganga from His feet. Brahma put her in His Kamanḍala* and took her to Vaikunṭha (*Vishṇu's abode*). Lord Ṣiva placed her on His head. *Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa*

Once, Sage Agastya swallowed the water of all the oceans. The Dēvas prayed for them to be refilled with water. Sage Agastya complied and filled the oceans with water from Ganga.

Once, King Bhagīratha (*an ancestor of Lord Rāma*) prayed to Ganga to wash away the sins of his forefathers, the sons of Sagara. She (*in the Purāṇas, rivers are anthropomorphed into women*) appeared to him and asked him to choose a boon. He said "If you in fact came to fulfill my wish, follow me down to earth." She said "I will come, but when I fall to earth, who is there that can withstand my force?" Bhagīratha then prayed to Lord Ṣiva to break the fall. Ṣiva consented to break her fall with the matted locks of

His hair. Ganga fell into Ṣiva's braids. From there, she flowed down and followed Bhagīratha. On the way, she flooded the Āṣram of Sage Jahnu. The Sage sucked all the water of Ganga. Bhagīratha prayed to Jahnu who released the water again. Bhagīratha then led Ganga to the place where the ashes of the sons of Sagara were. By the touch of the holy water of Ganga, their souls went to Swarga (*heaven*). Ganga came to be known as Bhāgīrathi by following Bhagīratha after being brought down to earth by him, and as Jāhnavi by being released by Sage Jahnu.

Once upon a time, Agni became pregnant with Ṣiva's semen due to a Ṣāpa by Ṣiva's Consort Pārvati. Unable to bear his condition, he approached Ganga and pleaded with her "O! Ganga! I simply cannot bear this semen of Ṣiva. Since you are eligible to bear His child as well, please take this semen from me and save me." Ganga agreed and took the semen and was carrying it. However, after some time, it became too much for her as well. She dropped it in some grass. Kumāraswāmi was born from it. *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*

Once, Lord Brahma was in Indra's* Sabha (*court*) along with many others including Mahābhishu (*a king of the Ikshvāku dynasty who had attained a place in heaven by performing many Yāgas*). Ganga, assuming the form of a woman, also came there. A gust of wind made the garment covering her chest slip aside; Mahābhishu kept staring at her, lovestruck. Brahma, watching all this, gave Mahābhishu a Ṣāpa that he would take birth as a mortal on earth. Ganga, who also noticed Mahābhishu's interest in her and reciprocated his love, proceeded to go to earth. On her way, she saw the Vasus and asked them where they were going. They told her that they were given a Ṣāpa by Sage Vasishṭha to be born

on earth and that they were headed to earth. They added "Mahābhishu has been born on earth as Ṣantanu and will be the cause of our births. We do not want to be born to anyone but you. You and Ṣantanu will be a couple." Since their wish coincided with her own desire, she agreed. They then put in a caveat, "The Ṣāpa only requires us to be born as humans and we do not wish to live long on earth. Please drown us as soon as we are born." When she protested that as a mother she hopes for a son who lives a long life, the youngest Vasu agreed to remain on earth for a long time.

Ganga saw King Pratīpa performing intense Tapas on the banks of Ganga and impressed by his virtues, she assumed the form of a woman, sat on his right thigh and asked him to marry her. He told her he was monogamous but that because she climbed his right thigh which is the place for one's son, she should marry his son.

Ṣantanu was born as Pratīpa's son. Once, after he grew to be a young man and was crowned as king, he was strolling along the banks of the Ganga river. Ganga assumed the form of a young woman and crossed his path. Ṣantanu fell in love with her for her beauty and grace. When he proposed to her, she said "I will marry you on condition that you never object to anything I do. The moment you say something disagreeable to me, I will leave you." Ṣantanu agreed to abide by her condition. She married him, became pregnant seven times and gave birth to a son each time. But as soon as a son was born, she took the infant and drowned him in the river. Ṣantanu, however shocked and unhappy at her behaviour, did not dare to show his displeasure for fear that she would leave. When the eighth son was born, he could no longer keep quiet. He said to her "You have cruelly murdered so many of

our babies. I will not let you kill this eighth one." Saying "You broke your promise to me. I cannot stay with you anymore", she related to him the story of the Vasus who were born as her sons. She raised the eighth son whom she named Dēvavrata (*more widely known as Bhīshma, a name he acquired as a result of the severe vow of celibacy he took in order to enable his father to marry again*), handed him over to Ṣantanu when he reached adult age and went back to Swarga (*heaven*). *Mahā Bhārata*

Gārdabhāsura – An Asura* (*Gārdabha is Sanskrit for 'donkey'*). In a previous life, he was Sāhasika (*son of the Asura Emperor Bali who was banished to the netherworld Pātāḷa by Vāmana, Lord Vishṇu's fifth incarnation, first human one*). *Bhāgavata; Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa*

The Asura Dhēnuka, who took the form of a donkey. *Bhāgavata*

Garga – Royal priest in the Sabha (*court*) of King Haihaya. When the king's Minister, Chandragupta, advised that they should take the sacred cow of Sage Jamadagni by any means necessary, he protested that it is a sin to take the property of a Brahmin. Chandragupta ignored his protest, went and killed the Muni, and brought back a calf. *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*

Garga was one of the sons of Manyu. His son was Ṣani (*different from the planet Saturn*). Garga was the priest in the Yādava court as well. Once, one Yādava insulted him, questioning whether he was male or female. Enraged by the insult, he prayed to Lord Ṣiva and wished for a son who will terrify the Yādavas. Garga's friend Yavana, hearing of this, took Garga and hid him in his herd of cattle. An Apsara* saw him there and fell in love with him. She and Garga had a son Kālayavana. *Bhāgavata*

Gārgya – Disciple of Bāshkali. He was the son of Ṣani, who was the son of Garga. He learnt a compilation of various branches of knowledge called "Vālakhilyākhya". *Bhāgavata*

Garuḍāchala – A mountain. Lord Vishṇu, after taking the Varāha (*the third incarnation, as a wild boar*) incarnation, was concerned that if He went to Swarga (*heaven*) in that form, His Consort Goddess Lakshmi would reproach Him, and He did not wish to anger Her. He instead sent Garutmanta* to bring His mountain for sport from Swarga while He lived out his incarnation. Garuḍa brought it to Him. The mountain came to be known as Garuḍāchala as a result. It is also known as Vēnkaṭāchala. (*Vēnkaṭēṣwara Māhātmyam is a 'Sthala Purāṇa'**). *Vēnkaṭēṣwara Māhātmyam*

Garutmanta* – He and Anūra were sons of Vinata and her husband Kaṣyapa. As soon as he emerged from the egg, he rose to the sky, returned and greeted his mother with a Namaskāra*. From the time of his birth, he obeyed the orders of Kadruva (*a Sapatni* of Vinata. Vinata became a slave to Kadruva as the result of losing a bet and due to a Ṣāpa* from her elder son*.) and served her sons, who were Nāgas*.

One day, as he was carrying the sons of Kadruva on his back and flying high in the sky, the serpents were burnt by the heat of the Sun and fell dead. Kadruva, seeing her sons dead, in her sadness and anger, scolded Garutmanta. Furious with his stepmother, Garutmanta went to his mother and asked her "Mother! I am strong enough to crush mountains to powder! Why do I have to serve these stepbrothers? Why are you a slave to Kadruva and her sons? Tell me." She related to him the manner of

her losing a wager and told him that is why she and he have to be servants. One day, as he was flying around aimlessly, Sage Nārada encountered him and asked "Why are you flying around while your mother is living as a servant even though you are immensely strong?" and described the circumstances surrounding the Ṣāpa she had received.

Garutmanta then went to his stepmother Kadruva and said "I am like a son to you. For my sake, please release your sister, my mother, from servitude." Kadruva said she would release Vinata and Garutmanta from servitude if he brings Amṛtam*. Garutmanta checked with Kadruva's sons also to find out what he must do to release his mother and received the same answer. With the agreement with Kadruva and her sons in place that he would bring Amṛtam and then he and his mother will be free, he went to his mother, informed her of his plan to bring Amṛtam and received her consent. He asked his mother for advice on what he should eat to give him strength for the trip and she told him that on his way, he will see thousands of Nishādas (*low caste tribal people*) in a place called Vishanidhi, who were harassing people and that he should eat them. She warned him to avoid eating Brahmins at any cost. When he asked how he could differentiate between Nishādas and Brahmins, she told him that his throat would burn if he tried to swallow a Brahmin. As Garutmanta was eating Nishādas, his throat started burning with one of them in his throat. He said "If there is a Brahmin stuck in my throat, come out." A Brahmin spoke up from his throat, saying "I am in love with a Nishāda woman. How can I leave her and live?" When Garutmanta granted that those who are related to Brahmins are also safe, the Brahmin and his Nishāda

lover then came out of his throat. Garutmanta then went to Kaṣyapa and said “I am going to Swarga to bring Amṛtam to win freedom from servitude for my mother and myself. I cannot satiate my hunger. Please provide sufficient food for me.” Kaṣyapa told him that an elephant and a tortoise, both huge in size, have been battling each other due to a Ṣāpa and suggested he eat both. As Garutmanta was flying in the sky with the elephant and tortoise in his beak, a (*articulate*) tree named Rōhiṇi invited him to rest on her. As he lighted on a branch of the tree, the branch broke under the weight of himself and his food. Vālakhilyas (*Munis with tiny bodies the size of a thumb*) were performing Tapas*, hanging upside down from that branch. Worried that the Munis would be harmed if he let the branch drop to the ground, he kept flying, with the branch also in his beak.

He went back to Kaṣyapa and with his permission, dropped the branch in an unpopulated forest after the Vālakhilyas left it, and ate the elephant and tortoise.

He then went to Dēvalōka (*abode of the Gods*), fought and killed the guards protecting the Amṛtam; quenched a fire surrounding the pot of Amṛtam; slipped through a machine designed by the Dēvas to cut to pieces anyone trying to reach the Amṛtam by making his body really tiny; destroyed the machine and beat up two huge serpents guarding the machine, and took the pot of Amṛtam. He then flew up into the sky, with the pot of Amṛtam. Lord Vishṇu, appreciative of the way he overcame all obstacles to obtaining Amṛtam to win release from bondage, gave Garutmanta boons due to which he became immortal even without drinking Amṛtam, became His vehicle and the mascot on His flag.

Indra*, learning that Garutmanta thus stole and was taking away Amṛtam, deployed the Vajrāyudha (*a thunderbolt, Indra's signature weapon, literally 'weapon of diamond'*) against Garutmanta. Not wanting to insult Indra's weapon, Garutmanta told it to take one of his feathers. Indra, impressed by the fact that his weapon had so little effect on him, became friends with Garutmanta and only requested that Garutmanta not give the Amṛtam to anyone except those who held his mother as a slave. Indra gave him a boon that serpents would be his natural prey. Garutmanta told Indra that he would have no objection if Indra were to snatch the Amṛtam after he delivers it to the serpents. Indra accordingly accompanied Garutmanta on his return. He handed the pot to Kadruva's sons but told them to place the pot on a bed of Darbha (*a dry sharp grass, considered sacred and used in religious rituals*) and drink it only after they purified themselves by a bath in the river. Having fulfilled his end of the bargain, he declared his mother free of her servitude and took her away. While the serpents were away taking a bath, Indra took the pot of Amṛtam and went back to Dēvalōka. Returning from the river and finding the pot of Amṛtam gone, the disappointed serpents licked the Darbha grass hoping that some Amṛtam might have seeped into it. All they got for their pains was that the sharp grass cut their tongues into two and ever since then, serpents had split tongues.

Indra's chariot-driver, Mātali, had a beautiful daughter named Guṇakēṣi. After scouring the worlds for a suitable husband for her, he decided to give her in marriage to Sumukha, grandson of Āryaka, a serpent king. On hearing this, Āryaka said "Sir! Garutmanta had already killed my son Chikura. He also stated that

he would kill Sumukha within the month. I cannot agree to this wedding." Mātali said he would beg Indra to allow Sumukha to enjoy a long life. At a time when Indra and Vishṇu were together, Mātali made his plea to Indra and obtained a boon that his son-in-law will live a long time. The marriage of what he considered his next meal and the extension of Sumukha's life enraged Garutmanta who went to Indra and berated him saying "Why did you save Sumukha from becoming my next meal? I can carry the whole world on one of my thinner feathers!" Vishṇu, hearing this, placed his hand on Garutmanta's head. Garutmanta immediately slumped, unable to bear the weight. Garutmanta realized how foolishly arrogant he was and prayed for Vishṇu's forgiveness. Vishṇu blessed him.

Garutmanta was a good friend of Gālava (*a Muni who was a disciple of Viṣvāmitra who needed to find 800 horses to give to his Guru as Dakshiṇa*). Garutmanta accompanied Gālava in his quest for the horses. On the way, he lost all his feathers due to a Ṣāpa by a female Sage named Ṣāṇḍili and regained them by begging her forgiveness. He then took his friend Gālava to King Yayāti who was also a good friend of his, to obtain horses. When they could get only 600 horses, he advised Gālava to give only those to Viṣvāmitra.

When Kaṣyapa was performing the Putra Kāmēshṭi Yāga*, the Vālakhilyas were helping gather flowers. They started to shiver, unable to bear the weight of the flowers. Indra laughed derisively at their plight. They felt humiliated and angry. They foretold that the son born to Kaṣyapa would be another Indra (*generic term for chief among members of a group or type*). Indra was scared that

he would lose his position. Knowing that the Vālakhilyas were infallible, Kaṣyapa amended the Vālakhilyas' prophecy with their consent by saying the son born to him as a result of the Yāga will be Khagēndra (*chief of birds*). Indra was relieved that his position was not threatened. (*The Khagēndra born thus was Garutmanta*) *Mahā Bhārata*

Once, Garutmanta ate the king of the fish in the Kāḷindi lake. All the fish in the lake approached Sage Saubhari who was performing Tapas nearby and related the cruel act of Garutmanta. Saubhari pronounced a Ṣāpa that if Garutmanta ever entered the lake again, he would die. Garutmanta avoided the lake from then on.

People, afraid of serpents, would leave food for the serpents under trees. The serpents, hoping to keep Garutmanta, the natural predator of serpents, from killing them, would give a portion of that food to Garutmanta. But Kāḷīya refused to give up any of his share to Garutmanta. Garutmanta came to attack him. Kāḷīya (*a serpent king*), aware of this Ṣāpa, entered this lake and stayed there considering it safe from Garutmanta (*natural predator of serpents in the Purāṇas)*. Garutmanta, afraid of the Ṣāpa, stayed away. *Bhāgavata*

Once, a serpent named Maṇināga, son of one of Kadruva's sons, Ṣēshu (*on whom Lord Vishṇu reclines in His abode, Vaikunṭha*), was strolling leisurely. Garutmanta caught him and carried him away in his beak. The serpent prayed to Lord Ṣiva. Ṣiva sent his mount Nandi (*articulate bull*) to get Maṇināga released. Nandi told Vishnu about it. Garutmanta did not not release Maṇināga even on Vishṇu's order. Vishṇu gave Garutmanta a Ṣāpa that he would become a weakling. When Garutmanta begged His forgiveness and

release from the Ṣāpa, Vishṇu told him to pray to Ṣiva. Garutmanta went to Ṣiva and begged Him for relief. Ṣiva told him that his strength will be restored if he takes a bath in the Gautami river. He did as Ṣiva directed and prayed to Him. The spot where Garutmanta bathed came to be known as Garuḍatīrtha. *Brahma Purāṇa*

Once, Garutmanta was killing and eating unlimited numbers of serpents. Vāsuki, an elder statesman of the serpents, worked out an arrangement with Garutmanta that one serpent will be provided to him as his meal each day and Garutmanta will stop the indiscriminate killing of serpents. A young serpent named Ṣankhachūḍa arrived, to be Garutmanta's meal for that day. Behind him came his mother, crying. A servant of Vāsuki brought red clothing for Ṣankhachūḍa to wear while he takes his position on the rock where he would be killed. On seeing all this, Jīmūtavāhana (*a just-married Vidyādhara p*rince) was filled with pity. He decided to save Ṣankhachūḍa's life by taking his place as Garutmanta's meal that day, and demanded the red costume the prey was supposed to wear. Ṣankhachūḍa refused to give him the red costume, insisting he would be Garutmanta's meal. Just then, in accordance with local custom, his mother-in-law sent a set of red clothing for the bridegroom. Jīmūtavāhana wore the new red clothes and stood on the Vadhyaṣila (*killing rock*). Garutmanta arrived and started to eat what appeared to be his meal for the day. Concerned that Jīmūtavāhana had been away too long, his parents and other relatives started searching for him. They noticed his head ornaments and a piece of flesh attached to them and nearby, they saw Jīmūtavāhana on the killing rock. Ṣankhachūḍa was there as

well, begging Garutmanta to leave Jīmūtavāhana alone, and eat him instead. Jīmūtavāhana was telling Garutmanta to eat him and satisfy his appetite. Garutmanta realized his error (*eating a humanoid instead of a serpent*) and was amazed at Jīmūtavāhana's self-sacrifice. The new bride Malayavati was weeping nearby. Jīmūtavāhana's aged parents were sobbing and begging Garutmanta to save their son's life, by bringing Amṛtam, if necessary. Remembering Amṛtam, Garutmanta went to Indra's world and requested Indra for some Amṛtam and obtaining some, he created a shower of it where Jīmūtavāhana was. The Amṛtam caused Jīmūtavāhana as well as all the previously killed serpents to return to life. Goddess Pārvati arrived and blessed Jīmūtavāhana to become emperor of Vidyādharas and presented him with a chariot with golden wheels. Garutmanta vowed to stop killing serpents. Jīmūtavāhana, reunited with his wife, ruled his kingdom happily. *Kathāsaritsāgara*

Gati I – Daughter of Kardama Prajāpati*. Wife of Pulahu. *Bhāgavata*

Gati II – Wife of Samhlāda. Mother of Panchajana. *Bhāgavata*

Gauramukha I – A Muni. Once, a king named Durjaya was hunting near his Āṣram and was exhausted by the exertion. Gauramukha invited the king and his retinue to a feast. Annoyed that a Muni, who subsisted on vegetables and roots in the woods, was offering hospitality to a king like himself but curious to find out what kind of hospitality he could provide, but also due to his state of exhaustion, the king accepted the offer. Gauramukha prayed to Lord Vishṇu to give him the provisions needed to serve

a dinner fit for a king and his retinue. Lord Vishṇu gave the Muni a magical diamond. With the power of the diamond, the Muni created a city in which he had the king rest in a magnificent palace with servants to cater to his every need, and served the king and his retinue a sumptuous dinner. Durjaya was astonished at the sudden opulence of the Muni. Then he found out that it was all due to the magical power of the diamond. The king wished to acquire the diamond by any means. He had his minister Virōchana request the Muni for it but was rebuffed. Durjaya returned to his city and dispatched an army headed by a man named Nīla to take the diamond. Nīla stopped his chariot in front of Gauramukha's Āṣram. Gauramukha was not at the Āṣram but the diamond was. As soon as Nīla dismounted from his chariot, chariots, horses, and warriors emerged from the diamond and attacked Nīla and his army. After some time, Durjaya himself arrived and joined the battle against the forces unleashed by the diamond. Gauramukha, returning to his Āṣram, was shocked and frightened by the ongoing battle. He prayed to Lord Vishṇu again. Lord Vishṇu, armed with his Chakra*, came and killed Durjaya and his army. *Varāha Purāṇa*

Gauramukha II – Disciple of Sage Ṣamīka. Ṣamīka sent him to King Parīkshit (*Arjuna's grandson*) to warn him that Ṣṛngi had given him a Ṣāpa* and that Parīkshit should devise a plan to protect himself from Takshaka (*an articulate serpent who vowed to kill him*). *Mahā Bhārata*

Gautama I – A Muni. Lord Brahma, after creating Ahalya, was considering who deserves a wife of such beauty. Indra* and the other Dēvas all came and clamored for her hand. Brahma

announced that whoever circles the earth and comes back first will marry her. They all set out upon their journey around the earth. Sage Gautama circled a cow in the process of calving. Brahma decided that that was equivalent to circling the earth and gave Ahalya to him.

Indra, having seen how beautiful Ahalya was, continued to desire her. One night, he came near Gautama's Āṣram in the form of a cock and crowed, signaling impending sunrise. Gautama left the house to perform his morning ablutions. As soon as he left, Indra took Gautama's form and slipped into bed beside Ahalya. She thought it was her husband in bed with her. Realizing it was still night, Gautama returned home. Finding his wife in bed with Indra, he gave his wife a Ṣāpa* that she would become a rock and gave a Ṣāpa to Indra that his body will be covered with vaginas. When they both begged for release from their Ṣāpas, he granted that Ahalya will be released from the Ṣāpa when Lord Rāma touches the rock with His foot, and that the vaginas covering Indra's body will appear like eyes to others. He had a son named Ṣatānīka by Ahalya. *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa; Rāmāyaṇa*

Gautama prayed to Lord Brahma and obtained a boon that crops will bloom as soon as he plants seeds. One year, when a terrible drought made food unavailable, all the Munis gathered at the Āṣram of Sage Gautama. Due to the boon received by Gautama, only his fields were yielding crops. Gautama shared his crops with everyone who came to him. Envious of his good fortune, some of the Munis created a cow by Māya (*Sanskrit for 'deceit' or 'illusion'*) and had her grazing on Gautama's fields. They also informed Gautama that a cow was eating his crops. Concerned

about the loss of crops but unwilling to beat the cow, he sprinkled some water on her and tried to shoo her away. The cow died when the water touched her. The Munis, saying "We cannot eat in the house of the killer of a cow", got up and were about to leave, expressing severe scorn for Gautama. Gautama begged them to tell him what he needs to do to be absolved from the sin of killing a cow. They told him that his sin will be absolved if he brings Ganga there. Gautama then performed Tapas* directed towards Lord Ṣiva. Ṣiva appeared, gave Gautama a lock of his hair and said "Squeeze this. That cow will return to life." Gautama squeezed the lock over the dead cow. The cow came to life and in the form of a woman, went on her way. The water squeezed from the lock of hair became a river. Because the water that became the river saved the life of a cow (*one of the meanings of the Sanskrit word 'Gō' is 'cow'*), it became known as Gōdāvari. Since Gautama brought the river, it is also known as Gautami. Afterwards, the Munis praised Gautama for bringing the Māya cow back to life. Wondering how the cow was Māya, Gautama, by Divya Dṛshṭi* saw how the Munis, while he was providing them a meal, ungratefully wronged him. Disgusted by their treachery, he gave them a Ṣāpa that they would become Pāshanḍas (*heretics*). Gautama went to King Brahmadatta and begged for food. He ate at the king's residence for one hundred and sixty years. One day, he found a piece of meat in his rice. He gave the king a Ṣāpa that he would become an eagle. The king begged his forgiveness because the mistake occurred without his knowledge. Gautama granted that when Lord Rāma touches his body, he will be free of the Ṣāpa. *Uttara Rāmāyaṇa*

Once, Sage Atri went to King Pṛthu seeking wealth and praised him profusely, comparing him to Brahma and Indra. Sage Gautama who was also present, took exception to Atri's extravagant praise of Pṛthu. Sage Kaṣyapa, also present, said that only someone as wise as Sanatkumāra can settle their dispute. Atri and Gautama went to him. He judged that Atri was right because a king bears the burden of protecting all the people. *Mahā Bhārata*

Gautama codified the rules of justice. Pledging that he will never look at Sage Vyāsa because he had criticized his work, he created an eye in his foot and saw Vyāsa with it. *Padma Purāṇa*

Gautama II – Mind-born son of Prachētasa (*mind-born son of Lord Brahma*). *Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa*

Gautami – A Brahmin woman. A serpent bit her son and the son died. As she was crying, a hunter heard her and offered to catch the serpent and kill it. She said "What is to be gained by killing it? My son is not going to come back alive! It was his fate. Why blame the serpent?" The (*articulate*) serpent said "What could I do? Mṛtyu (*the Goddess of death*) sent me to bite him. The fault is that of Mṛtyu. Punish her, not me." Mṛtyu came and said "Kāla (*the God of Death, usually called Yama*) sent me. I do whatever Kāla orders me to do. I am not guilty." Kāla came and said "It is wrong to say that someone killed. What happens to someone depends entirely on that person's fate. Any participants are just the proximate cause of the event. It was only the boy's fate, not the serpent, nor Mṛtyu that caused his death. They are not punishable." The hunter let the serpent go. *Mahā Bhārata*

Gavijāta – A Muni. Once, Sage Chyavana was performing Tapas*

submerged at the confluence of the Ganga and Yamuna rivers. One day, some fishermen threw a net into the river to catch fish. Chyavana was caught in the net along with fish. A king, Nahusha, offered to pay the fishermen fair value for Chyavana. Even when he offered to give his entire kingdom as the price, Chyavana insisted that it is not fair. As Nahusha stood perplexed by Chyavana's assertion, Gavijāta came there and said, "A Brahmin and a cow have the same qualities. Therefore, only a cow is equal in value to a Brahmin." *Mahā Bhārata*

Gaya I – An Asura*. His height was one thousand miles. He became powerful by pleasing Lord Vishṇu by singing His praises. Munis and Dēvas complained to Lord Brahma that he was harassing the worlds. Brahma went to Gaya and after praising him, said "I am planning a Yāga. I cannot visualize a more appropriate and holy site as a location for it than your body." Flattered by Brahma's words, the Asura told Brahma to take his body and use it for His Yāga. Brahma then brought a rock named Dēvarūpiṇi and placed it on Gaya's head to keep it immobile. Noticing that the head was still moving, Brahma prayed to Lord Vishṇu. Vishṇu came and stood on Gaya. Gaya then said "Why is Vishṇu standing on me? I will remain immobile and let Brahma finish His Yāga. Give me a boon that this place will be known by my name and that if someone performs funeral rites for his ancestors here, the ancestors will attain Mukti*." Vishṇu granted the boon as requested. *Vāyu Purāṇa*

Gaya II – The place where the Asura* Gaya fell. A holy place of pilgrimage. *Vāyu Purāṇa*

Gaya III – Sonof Ūru and his wife Āgnēyi. *Matsya Purāṇa*

Gaya IV – A Gandharva*. King of the city of Maṇipura. Once when he was flying back from worshipping Lord Ṣiva, he spat. The spit, blown around by wind, fell on Lord Kṛshṇa, who was returning from His morning ablutions and fresh from a bath. Kṛshṇa vowed that He will find the one who spat on Him and kill him. Gaya, terrified by hearing Kṛshṇa's words from Ākāṣavāṇi*, sought the protection of Lord Brahma. Brahma told him that He was not powerful enough to oppose Kṛshṇa and suggested that he should pray to Ṣiva. When he went to Ṣiva, He said that He could not oppose Kṛshṇa because they (*Ṣiva and Vishṇu*) were one and the same. As Gaya was resigning himself to an early death, Sage Nārada met him on his way and suggested that he should seek Ṣaraṇu* from Arjuna. Gaya went running to Arjuna and gasped "I seek your protection. Please save my life." Arjuna assured Gaya of his protection, and only then asked "What is the danger from which you are seeking my protection?" Gaya told him. Arjuna was very unhappy that he undertook the protection of someone who was subject to the wrath of Kṛshṇa. Kṛshṇa sent a message to Arjuna, asking him to surrender Gaya to Him. Arjuna responded that he could not give up someone who sought his Ṣaraṇu. Arjuna's relatives and well-wishers tried to negotiate a way out of the stand-off, but failed. Kṛshṇa and Arjuna battled each other fiercely on account of Gaya. Finally, the Dēvas came and pleaded with Kṛshṇa and stopped the fighting. Gaya fell on Kṛshṇa's feet and prayed for His forgiveness. Kṛshṇa relented and forgave him. *Gayōpākhyānam*

Gaya V – Son of Pushkariṇi and and her husband Ulmuka. He

was a brother of Anga and Khyāti. *Bhāgavata*

Gaya VI – Son of Havirdhāna and father of Barhishmati and Jitavrata. *Bhāgavata*

Gaya VII – Son of Nakta, of the dynasty of Bharata. His wife was Jayanti. Their sons were Chitraratha, Swāti and Avarōdha. This king was a Rājarshi (*royal Muni*). He practiced Dharma (*the righteous path*), was devoted to Yāgas and made everyone happy. During his reign, the earth was like Kāmadhēnu (*a cow which gives any desired things without limit*). *Bhāgavata*

Gaya VIII – Son of Sudyumna. *Bhāgavata*

Gaya IX – Son of Āyu and his wife Swarbhānavi. Nahusha and Anēnasa were his brothers. *Mahā Bhārata*

Gaya X – A king who worshipped Agni and obtained boons that enabled him to maintain celibacy, a calm demeanor, and a charitable bent. He donated much gold to Brahmins. The food he gave away would have made hills. His charitable donations were innumerable, like the stars in the sky. The city of Gaya (*a city in the State of Bihar, in North India. Gautama Buddha was from near Gaya*) attained fame due to him. It became a holy place of pilgrimage. *Mahā Bhārata*

Ghaṇṭākarṇa – King of Piṣāchas (*a class of demons*). He was a servant of Kubēra (*the God of Wealth*). His younger brother was Kālāntaka. Their bodies were covered by flesh, blood and nerves (*of the people they ate*). Among others, they killed and ate Brahmins as well.

Once, as Lord Kṛshṇa was travelling to the Kailāsa mountain,

Ghanṭākarṇa saw Him in the Badarika forest. He asked Kṛshṇa "Who are you?" Kṛshṇa told him that He was of the Yadu Dynasty and that He was going to Kailāsa. Saying "Why are you travelling alone? Piṣāchas will hurt you", he sent away his retinue and stayed by Kṛshṇa's side, singing Kṛshṇa's praises, while regretting his way of life. Pleased by his devotion, Kṛshṇa revealed His true form. Immediately, Ghanṭākarṇa lost his Piṣācha form and assumed a divine body. He said "Sir, I am presenting my corpse as an offering to you." Kṛshṇa said "I do not touch a corpse. You will attain Dēva Lōka (*abode of the Gods, heaven*) and the position of Indra*." Ghanṭākarṇa went to heaven. *Hari Vamṣa*

Ghaṭōtkacha – Son of Bhīma by Hiḍimbi (*in addition to sharing Draupadi, each Pānḍava had at least one other wife not shared with the brothers*). Even though he was the son of an Asura* mother, he lived a righteous life and behaved with devotion to the Pānḍavas. In the Mahā Bhārata war, he used his magical powers to great effect against the Kaurava army. He fought and killed Alambusu, son of Jaṭāsura, who had earlier killed Irāvanta, son of Arjuna and Ulūchi. He also killed Alāyudhāsura (*younger brother of Bakāsura, whom Bhīma had killed during the Pānḍavas' exile in the forest*) and then attacked Karṇa. Karṇa could not withstand Ghaṭōtkacha's fury so he used up the special weapon Ṣakti which Indra* had given him (*after he deceived Karṇa into giving up his natural protection of the body armor he was born with, and as a single-use weapon*) to kill Ghaṭōtkacha.

The Pānḍavas were grief-stricken by Ghaṭōtkacha's death. Kṛshṇa, however, told Arjuna that it was an event to celebrate rather than to mourn. He explained "As long as Karṇa had the

Ṣakti given to him by Indra, he was invincible even to you and me. Now that he used it up on Ghaṭōtkacha, we can defeat him. Ghaṭōtkacha is just like Alāyudhāsura and Kimmīra. If he lived, he would have become like Rāvaṇa. If he had not been killed, I would have to kill him. I am spared of that now." Mēghavarṇa and Anjanaparva were Ghaṭōtkacha's sons. *Mahā Bhārata*

Ghōsha – Son of King Puḷinda and father of Vajramitra. *Bhāgavata*

Ghṛtāchi – An Apsara*. She was the daughter of Kapila, daughter of Daksha Prajāpati* and his wife Dharaṇi. She had a son Ruru by Pramati. *Mahā Bhārata*

Once, she put on nice clothes and ornaments and was going to a rendezvous with Kāma (*another name for Manmatha**). Viṣvakarma* saw her and expressed a desire to have sex with her. She rejected his advances. This infuriated him and he gave her a Ṣāpa* that she would be born to a woman of the Ṣūdra* caste. She gave him a counter-Ṣāpa that he will fall to the earth. As a result of the Ṣāpa, she was born to a man named Madana and a cowherd woman and was performing Tapas* at a holy place named Prayāga. Viṣvakarma, born on earth, saw her, remembered their past encounter and made love to her. Her sons became carpenters and jewellers. *Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa*

Once, she was strolling near where Sage Vyāsa was performing Tapas. Just then, he experienced sexual arousal and ejaculated. In that frame of mind, he looked up and saw her. Afraid that he might give her a Ṣāpa, she assumed the form of a parrot. Ṣuka was born from his semen. He had some attributes of parrots. *Dēvī Bhāgavata*

Ghūrṇika – Female companion of Dēvayāni (*wife of Kacha*). When Dēvayāni was thrown into a well by Ṣarmishṭa, Ghūrṇika came searching for her. *Mahā Bhārata*

Gindama – A Muni. Once, he and his wife took the form of deer and were making love in a forest. King Pāṇḍu who was in the forest at that time, shot the male with an arrow. The deer, in a human voice, said "I am a Muni named Gindama, experiencing romance in the body of a deer. While it is proper for a king to hunt deer and other animals, it is improper to shoot one while it is engaged in sex." Pāṇḍu was upset by the Muni's words and spoke to him harshly. In response, the Muni in the body of a deer, gave him a Ṣāpa* that if Pāṇḍu ever engaged in sex with one of his wives, he will die on the spot. After giving the Ṣāpa, the Muni died. *Mahā Bhārata*

Giribhadra – Wife of King Mitra. Chākshushu Manu* was born to her. Six days after he was born, he laughed out loud when his mother was giving him a kiss. When the mother expressed surprise that her baby, who had not yet opened his eyes, laughed out loud, he said, "A cat named Jātahāriṇi is waiting to swallow me. I have not done anything to cause you happiness. I laughed because I do not understand why you are so pleased." Giribhadra angrily said, "If you do not like me giving you a kiss, I will stop", and stomped out of the birthing room. The cat, Jātahāriṇi, carried the baby away then. *Mārkanḍēya Purāṇa*

Girika – Daughter born by the union of Ṣuktimati river (*in the Purāṇas, rivers are anthropomorphed into women*) with Kōlāhala mountain (*in the Purāṇas, mountains are anthropomorphed into*

men). Kōlāhala was blocking the course of Ṣuktimati. Uparicharavasu kicked the mountain out of the way and cleared the way for the river to flow. The grateful river rewarded Uparicharavasu by giving him her daughter Girika in marriage. Once, when his wife was having her period, the Vasu was advised by his Pitṛ Dēvas (*ancestors in heaven*) that he should give her some meat to eat. Vasu went to the forest to bring meat. While he was in the forest, thinking loving thoughts of his wife made him ejaculate. He collected the semen in a leafy cup and gave it to an eagle to carry it to Girika. This semen fell into the mouth of a fish. *Mahā Bhārata*

Girivrajapura – (*literally, a city formed by a group of hills*) Capital city of Jarāsandha. The city, as its name implies, was surrounded by hills named Gōratha, Ṛshabha, Vaihāra, etc., which formed an impenetrable barrier that made it impossible for enemies to breach. In addition, on the peak of a mountain nearby named Chaitraka, there were kettle-drums which automatically sounded if any outsider entered the city (*early warning system*). *Mahā Bhārata*

Gōbila – A Brahmin. He was chanting hymns from the Sāmavēda at a Yāga being performed by another Brahmin, Dēvadatta. When he sang an incorrect note, Dēvadatta exclaimed "You fool!" Gōbila, upset by the rebuke, gave the host a Ṣāpa* that he would have an idiot son. Dēvadatta fell at Gōbila's feet in remorse and begged his forgiveness. Gōbila then amended the Ṣāpa, that after some time, the son would become a poet. *Dēvī Bhāgavata*

Gōdāvari – Once, while a Brahmin woman was on a pilgrimage,

Aṣvini, son of Sūrya (*the Sun God*) was overcome by lust for her and raped her. Ashamed, she returned to her husband Sutapa with the son born as a result of the rape. Sutapa abandoned her. By her spiritual power, she became a river. That river is the Gōdāvari. *Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa*

It could be considered that this river also flowed from Lord Ṣiva's locks of hair. Once, when a terrible drought made food unavailable, all the Munis gathered at the Āṣram of Sage Gautama. Due to a boon received by Gautama, only his fields were yielding crops. Gautama shared his crops with everyone who came to him. Envious of his good fortune, some of the Munis created a cow by Māya (*Sanskrit for 'deceit' or 'illusion'*), and had her graze on Gautama's fields. They also informed Gautama that a cow was eating his crops. Concerned about the loss of crops but unwilling to beat the cow, he sprinkled some water on her and tried to shoo her away. The cow died when the water touched her. The Munis, saying "We cannot eat in the house of the killer of a cow", got up and were about to leave, expressing severe scorn for Gautama. Gautama begged them to tell him what he needs to do for absolution from the sin of killing a cow. They told him that his sin will be absolved if he brings Ganga there. Gautama then performed Tapas* directed towards Lord Ṣiva. Ṣiva appeared, gave Gautama a lock of his hair and said "Squeeze this. That cow will return to life." Gautama squeezed the lock over the dead cow. The cow came to life and in the form of a woman, went on her way. The water squeezed from the lock of hair became a river. Because the water that became the river saved the life of a cow (*one of the meanings of the Sanskrit word 'Gō' is 'cow'*), it

became known as Gōdāvari. Since Gautama brought the river, it is also known as Gautami. *Varāha Purāṇa*

Gōdēvi – Wife of Brahmadatta. Their son was Vishvaksēna. *Mahā Bhārata*

Gōkarṇa – A Kshētra*. The sons of Sagara, searching for their stolen sacrificial horse, dug up this Kshētra as well. It was submerged in the ocean. When several Munis begged Paraṣurāma (*sixth incarnation of Lord Vishṇu*) for help, He ordered Samudra (*God of the Ocean*) to bring the Kshētra back up. Samudra left the place and the Munis returned there. *Brahma Purāṇa*

Gōmukha – A disciple of Ṣākalya. He taught the collection of Ṛg Vēda hymns he had learnt to Jātukarṇi. *Bhāgavata*

Gōpati – Grandson of Emperor Ṣibi. Afraid of Paraṣurāma (*the sixth incarnation of Lord Vishṇu, in which he attacked Kshatriyas[warrior caste, consisting of kings and princes] twenty-one times and decimated them*), he went to the forest and protected the cattle. *Mahā Bhārata*

Gōtīrtha – A place of pilgrimage along the Sarayu river. This was the place where Lord Rāma, ending His incarnation, and a large number of people who accompanied Him, drowned themselves in the river and ascended to heaven. With many people submerging themselves in the river at the same time, it felt as if a herd of cows were swimming. the place came to be known as Gōtīrtha for that reason. *Raghu Vamṣa*

Grāmaṇi – A Gandharva*. Father of Dēvavati. He gave his daughter in marriage to Sukēṣa. *Uttara Rāmāyaṇa*

Grasta – An Asura*. Once, as he abducted the wife of Bhṛgu and was carrying her away, she gave him a Ṣāpa* that he would become an insect. Accordingly, he became an insect. One day, Paraṣurāma (*Lord Vishṇu's sixth incarnation*) was sleeping with his head resting on the thigh of Karṇa (*who was learning powerful weapons for use in the Mahā Bhārata war, having lied to Paraṣurāma that he was a Brahmin*); this insect drilled Karṇa's thigh. The wound caused by the insect was bleeding. The touch of blood against his head woke up Paraṣurāma. As soon as it saw the face of Paraṣurāma, it was released from the Ṣāpa. The Asura then went on his way. *Mahā Bhārata*

Gṛdhragōmāyusamvādam– (*Sanskrit for "a conversation between a vulture and a fox"*) When a child died, his parents and relatives brought the corpse to the burial ground and were crying. A vulture and a fox lurking in a hole in the ground both coveted the corpse for a meal. The vulture, realizing that it would not be possible to eat the corpse after dark, approached the mourners and said "Why do you cry? Will your crying bring the dead back to life? Once it gets dark, some Asura* might come and eat you living ones as well. Go home before it gets dark." Hearing these words and concerned that the vulture will eat the corpse if they left before dark, the fox emerged from its hole and pretending to be sympathetic to them, said "O! Vulture! Why do you say that? Is it not possible that a Muni will come and restore the child to life? At least, let them sit by the child and express their grief. Let them stay until it gets dark." *Mahā Bhārata*

Gṛtsnamada I – Son of Suhōtra and father of Ṣunaka. *Bhāgavata*

Gṛtsnamada II – Son of Vītahavya and father of Sutējasa. *Mahā Bhārata*

Guha – Leader of an aboriginal tribe. Devotee of Lord Rāma. He lived in the city of Ṣṛngibēripura. He ferried Sīta, Rāma amd Lakshmaṇa across the river Ganga. When Bharata (*younger brother of Rāma. His mother Kaikēyi used boons from her husband to exile Rāma to the forest, but Bharata was devoted to Rāma and did not accept the kingdom*) was tracing his brother's path to meet Him, Guha, seeing the army, thought he was going to attack Rāma. Guha tried to block Bharata and refused to let him cross the river. He allowed Bharata to cross the Ganga only after Bharata assured him that he was going to see Rāma and pay his respects. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Guṇakēṣi – Daughter of Mātali (*Indra's* chariot-driver*). Wife of Sumukha. She was instrumental in her husband's life expectancy being increased (see **Garutmanta***). *Mahā Bhārata*

Guṇanidhi – Son of Yagjnadatta. In a later life, he was Kubēra (*God of Wealth*). *Ṣiva Purāṇa*

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Haihaya – One day, Lakshmi, the Consort of Lord Vishṇu happened to see a king riding a horse and stood staring at him. Saying "Why are you standing still looking at a horse? Maybe you like its shape so much you would like to be one", Vishṇu gave Her a Ṣāpa* that She would become a Baḍaba (*mare*). The mare and Vishṇu had a son while He also assumed the form of a horse. Lakshmi was released from the Ṣāpa when the son was born and suggested that they should take the son with them. Vishṇu told Her "Leave him here. Turvasa is performing Tapas* to beget a son. He will raise our son." The boy born to Vishṇu and Lakshmi while they were both horses was Haihaya (*a variant of the name is Hayahaya*). He killed Kālakētu and married Ēkāvaḷi. *Dēvī Bhāgavata*

Hālāhala – Virulent poison that emerged when the ocean of milk was churned. Terrified, Asuras* and Dēvas ran to Lord Ṣiva and prayed to Him to save them. Ṣiva, in order to prevent it from destroying the worlds, swallowed it and kept it in His throat. He became Nīla Kanṭha (*meaning 'one with blue throat', one of Ṣiva's many names*). *Bhāgavata*

Halandhana – Son of Nābhāga. His son was Vatsaprīti. *Bhāgavata*

Hālāsya – A holy place of pilgrimage. Former name of the city of Mathura (*where Lord Kṛshṇa stayed for several years after killing His evil uncle Kamsa*). *Skānda Purāṇa*

Hamsa I – A Gandharva* king. He was reborn as Dhṛtarāshṭra, the Kaurava emperor. *Mahā Bhārata*

Hamsa II – Son of Brahmadatta, king of the country of Sālva. Brother of Ḍibhaka. The brothers were not only close to each other but also close friends of Jarāsandha, the king of Magadha. They joined Jarāsandha when he attacked Mathura and fought Lord Kṛshṇa. The brothers prayed to Lord Ṣiva and obtained a boon from Him that even Indra* or other Dēvas could not defeat them. As a result they became very arrogant. Once, they went to the forest to hunt and seeing Sage Durvāsa, taunted him saying "Why do you not enjoy marital pleasure instead of sitting here wearing a loincloth?", they pulled his loincloth. Durvāsa told Kṛshṇa about their humiliation of Munis and requested Him to kill them. Hamsa advised his father to perform a Rājasūya Yāga* and sent an emissary to go to Kṛshṇa and demand salt as tribute for the Rājasūya. He insulted Sātyaki (*close friend and constant companion of Kṛshṇa*) who brought Kṛshṇa's response.

The brothers were very strong. Defeating them in battle is impossible under ordinary circumstances. In view of this, and using the fact that the brothers were very fond of each other, Kṛshṇa decided to kill them by subterfuge. He caused a rumour to be spread that Hamsa had died, and made sure that Ḍibhaka heard it. Ḍibhaka believed the rumour and despairing of living in a world without Hamsa in it, killed himself by drowning in a river. On seeing the body of Ḍibhaka, Hamsa also died. *Mahā Bhārata*

Hamsadhwaja I – Son of Vṛshadhwaja and father of Dharmadhwaja and Kṛṣadhwaja. *Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa*

Hamsadhwaja II – A king. When he captured the sacrificial horse of Dharmarāja's Aṣvamēdha Yāga*, Arjuna came to fight him and retrieve the horse. Hamsadhwaja asked his son Sudhanva to accompany him into battle. After Sudhanva did obeisance to his mother and obtained her blessing in preparation to go to war, he went to take leave of his wife. She asked him to give her the gift of his semen before leaving. Sudhanva went to the battlefield after fulfilling her wish. For this reason, he arrived late. The king was furious with him and ordered that he be thrown into a pot of boiling oil. The soldiers did as instructed, but the hot oil did not hurt Sudhanva at all. Realizing that this was no ordinary man, the soldiers reported what happened to the king. Everyone realized that he was not affected by the punishment beacause he was a devotee of Vishṇu. He was made the commander of the army. He fought valiantly but was killed by Arjuna. Hamsadhwaja's second son Suratha also fought and died. Hamsadhwaja sued for peace and released the sacrificial horse. *Jaimini Bhārata*

Hanumān – Son of female Vānara* named Anjana, wife of a Vānara named Kēsari. Kēsari, fed up with married life, went to perform Tapas* after instructing his wife to worship Vāyu (*the God of Wind*). She was following his direction. Vāyu, pleased with Anjana's devotion, appeared to her and gave her Lord Ṣiva's semen that was in his stomach. She became pregnant from the semen and gave birth to a son. That son was Ānjanēya (*Sanskrit for 'Anjana's son'; also known popularly as Hanumanta, Hanumān, Māruti, etc.*). Soon after he was born, he thought the

rising Sun was a fruit and tried to eat it. Rāhu (*Asura* who occasionally 'swallows' Sūrya, the Sun God, causing solar eclipses*) came there and threatened Hanumān. Hanumān then tried to swallow Rāhu, who went and told Indra* about this big boy. Indra came on his mount Airāvata (*articulate elephant*) to chastise the boy. Hanumān leapt on to the huge elephant. Indra hit him with his Vajrāyudha (*a thunderbolt, Indra's signature weapon, literally 'weapon of diamond'*). Hanumān's Hanu (*chin*) was injured. Ānjanēya acquired the name Hanumān as a result. Upset with Indra for hurting his son, Vāyu stopped functioning.

As the movement of air ceased, the Dēvas, in a panic, went to Lord Brahma. Brahma learned the reason for Vāyu's inaction and prayed to Vāyu. All the Dēvas also praised Vāyu. Vāyu came to Brahma with his son in his arms. All the Dēvas gave boons to both of them.

Hanumān went to Sūrya to receive his education. Sūrya said to him "I do not stay in one place. How will you get your education from me?" Hanumān responded by spanning the globe, with one foot on the Udayādri (*meaning 'the mountain where the Sun rises' or eastern mountain*) and the other foot on the Astagiri (*meaning 'the mountain where the Sun sets' or western mountain*). Amazed by Hanumān's power, Sūrya agreed to be his Guru. As Sūrya moved across the sky, Hanumān walked ahead of him and learnt his lessons. He learnt music and became an authority on the art of music.

Hanumān became the minister of Sugrīva, the Vānara king of Kishkindha. When Vāli (*older brother of Sugrīva*) drove Sugrīva away, Hanumān remained loyal to Sugrīva and stayed with him.

When Rāma and Lakshmaṇa were wandering in the forest (*looking for Sīta after learning that She was abducted*), Sugrīva saw them, and afraid of these powerful humans, sent Hanumān to find out who they were and what they were doing in his forest. Hanumān went and greeted them with a Namaskāra* and inquired about their well-being. He informed them that he is the minister of Sugrīva, and took them to Sugrīva. He introduced Rāma and Lakshmaṇa to Sugrīva, who learned their purpose and appraised them of his situation. That was the first time Hanumān laid eyes on Rāma and he instantly became His devotee. Rāma learned of the unique strengths and abilities of Hanumān. When Sugrīva sent his Vānara warriors in all directions to search for Sīta, Rāma gave His ring (*by which Sīta could be sure that the emissary came from Rāma and not from an Asura or other impostor*) only to Hanumān. All the Vānaras, after searching everywhere without finding any trace of Sīta, reached the coast of the southern sea (*the Indian Ocean*). Unwilling to go back and face Sugrīva having failed to find Sīta, they sat down, in Prāyōpavēṣam*. Overhearing their conversation, Sampāti (*a giant articulate bird*) informed them that Rāvaṇa is holding Sīta captive in Lanka*. It is necessary to cross the ocean to reach Lanka. When they were pondering on who among them would be able to cross the ocean, Jāmbavanta (*articulate bear*) informed them that only Hanumān could do it (*Hanumān once lost his divine power and strength due to a Sage's Ṣāpa*; the Sage provided that he would regain his power when someone reminds him of it*).

Hanumān thus realized that he had the ability to fly across the ocean, and prepared to go to Lanka. He flew up into the sky and

was proceeding towards Lanka. The Maināka mountain (*in the Purāṇas, mountains are anthropomorphed into men*), until then submerged in the sea, rose up and invited Hanumān to rest on his peak for a while. Hanumān did so and continued his flight. Surasa, a Nāga* woman expanded her body and blocked his way. Hanumān reduced himself to a tiny size and passed through her. He reached Lanka. A female Asura guarding the city gate would not let him pass. He beat her up and entered the city. He wandered all over the city. Finally he saw Sīta sitting sadly in the Aṣōka garden, surrounded by female Asura guards. Climbing a tree, he waited until the Asuras left, came down from the tree, approached Sīta and told Her that he is a servant of Rāma. He showed Rāma's ring and requested Her to come with him. She declined but gave him objects that Rāma would recognise as Hers.

Hanumān, exuberant with his success in finding Sīta and to show his contempt for Rāvaṇa, went on a rampage of destruction through the Asura's city. He pulled plants in the gardens with their roots. He destroyed the water fountains. At first, the Asuras ignored him, thinking "How much damage can one Vānara cause?" But then, Hanumān started beating up Rāvaṇa's soldiers. They went to Rāvaṇa and complained. Some soldiers were sent to capture Hanumān. He killed them all. Next, Jambumāli, a warrior and Akshaya, son of Rāvaṇa were sent to fight him and he killed them. Indrajit, another son of Rāvaṇa, then used the Brahmāstra (*the most powerful weapon that can be obtained by Tapas*) on Hanumān and captured him. He was bound hand and foot and taken to Rāvaṇa. Surprised and worried that one Vānara could cause as much damage as Hanumān did, Rāvaṇa engaged him in

conversation. Hanumān hurled insults at him and called him a thief for abducting Sīta. Rāvaṇa, infuriated now, had his soldiers tie some rags to Hanumān's tail and light them on fire. Hanumān, prayed to Agni (*the God of Fire*) and Vāyu (*the God of Wind; Hanumān's father*), used the flames to burn down all of Lanka, sparing only the house of Vibhīshaṇa (*youngest brother of Rāvaṇa, an ally of Rāma*) and the Aṣōka garden. He then bid farewell to Sīta, crossed the ocean, returned to Kishkindha, and spread the news that he had seen Sīta.

Now energized knowing that Sīta was safe and exactly where She was, Rāma, Lakshmaṇa, and Sugrīva proceeded with war preparations. They built a causeway over the ocean and entered Lanka. The war started. Hanumān not only functioned as Rāma's transport, but also fought and killed Asuras.

After Rāvaṇa's son Atikāya and and the commander of his forces Mahākāya were killed in battle, Indrajit entered the fray. His powerful arrows knocked Lakshmaṇa unconscious, and unable to recover. Hanumān was sent to bring a medicine hidden by Indra on Mahōdaya mountain between Chandragiri and Drōṇagiri in the Himalayas. Hanumān reached there. But the people living there refused to give him the medicine. Deciding that fighting them is not the right strategy, Hanumān pulled the mountain itself out of the ground, and carried it to the battlefield. Many of the warriors in Rāma's army were able to use the medicine. After Indrajit died in battle, Rāvaṇa himself entered the battlefield. He was fighting only against Rāma and Lakshmaṇa, raining arrows on them. Lakshmaṇa lost consciousness again.

Hanumān was sent to bring a herb named Sanjīvani (*with the*

power to revive the unconscious and even the dead). Rāvaṇa, in an attempt to prevent the resuscitation of Lakshmaṇa, sent Kālanēmi, son of Mārīcha, to stop Hanumān from bringing Sanjīvani. Kālanēmi reached the mountain where the Sanjīvani plant grows ahead of Hanumān, and taking the form of a Muni, sat as if performing Tapas. He greeted Hanumān when he got there, pretending to be a devotee of Rāma. Sensing that Hanumān was thirsty, the Asura directed him to a nearby lake, knowing there was a fierce crocodile there, and hoping it will kill Hanumān. When Hanumān was drinking from the lake, the crocodile grabbed him and tried to drag him into the lake. Hanumān wrestled with it and kicked it. A divine female named Dhānyamāli emerged from the crocodile, released from a Ṣāpa that had turned her into one. She told Hanumān her story and also revealed the plot by Rāvaṇa and Kālanēmi to thwart his efforts. Hanumān then left the lake and on his way, killed Kālanēmi. When he reached where the Sanjīvani was, some Gandharvas* who lived there, obstructed his path. They begged him to stay there with them. He fought and defeated them, and carried the Drōṇa mountain to the battlefield and Lakshmaṇa was revived.

Hanumān joined the battle and killed many Asuras including Khadgarōma. After Rāvaṇa was killed, it was Hanumān who informed Sīta of Rāma's great victory. At Rāma's direction, he also went ahead of Rāma's force to Ṣṛngibēripura to inform Guha (*a tribal chief who controlled the crossing of the Ganga river*), and to Nandigrāma to inform Bharata (*he could not abide living in Ayōdhya in the absence of Rāma, and stayed here for the duration of Rāma's exile*) of the triumphant return of Rāma, Lakshmaṇa,

and Sīta. Hanumān accompanied Rāma to Ayōdhya and after Rāma's coronation, took His leave and returned to Kishkindha. *Rāmāyaṇa*

In the next epoch, when Bhīma (*half-brother of Hanumān, being the son of Kunti by Vāyu*) was on a mission to bring Saugandhika flowers for Draupadi, Hanumān extended his tail and sat in the way. At first, Bhīma politely requested him to let him pass. Pleading old age and weakness, Hanumān asked him to move his tail out of the way and proceed. Bhīma did not know that the monkey he was dealing with was the legendary Hanumān. Bhīma tried to lift the tail with his left hand. The tail did not budge. He tried with both hands, putting his full weight behind them. It still did not move. He then realized that this must be Hanumān and greeted him with a Namaskāra*. Pleased by the respect shown by Bhīma, Hanumān assumed his true form. Hanumān offered to help the Pāṇḍavas in the upcoming war, but was persuaded to adorn the flag on Arjuna's chariot instead. *Mahā Bhārata*

Hara – Son of Manu* named Dharma. His wife was Nanda. *Bhāgavata*

Hari – Son of Tārakāksha, one of the Tripurāsuras. When he prayed to Lord Vishṇu, He appeared. Hari asked for a boon by which "When anyone in one of our Puras (*Sanskrit for 'cities'*) dies, ten Asuras exactly like him shall emerge from his corpse when it is dipped in a well in the city. All wells in our cities shall have water with this property." Vishṇu granted the boon. But when Ṣiva opened His third eye, all the cities simultaneously were destroyed by fire. *Mahā Bhārata*

Hāridrumata – Guru of Satyakāma. *Matsya Purāṇa*

Harikēṣa – A Yaksha (*semi-divine beings with special magical powers*). Son of Pūrṇabhadra. He performed severe Tapas* directed towards Lord Ṣiva for so long that anthills grew on his body. Ṣiva appeared to him and gave him a boon that he would be the chief law-enforcement officer in the city of Kāṣi*. *Mahā Bhārata*

Hariṣchandra – A king of the Sūrya (*solar; one of the two major royal lineages, the other being Chandra, or lunar*) dynasty (*ancestor of Lord Rāma*). Son of Triṣanku. He was the king of Ayōdhya. His wife was Chandramati. She was a Sādhvi (*devoted and virtuous woman*). Hariṣchandra was sad because he had no offspring. Sage Nārada suggested to him that he should perform a religious rite involving a Vrata* to please Varuṇa (*the God of Rain*). He performed the Vrata vowing that he will perform a Yāga using the son born to him as the sacrificial animal. A son, Rōhita, was born to Hariṣchandra. As soon as the son was born, Varuṇa came to him and demanded that he perform the Yāga. Hariṣchandra promised to do it at the end of his wife's confinement. Varuṇa came back. This time Hariṣchandra promised he would do it when the boy grew teeth. Varuṇa came back and Hariṣchandra kept postponing the Yāga, with his love for his son overcoming his scruples. Rōhita, thinking of his father's dilemma, left home and went to the forest. Hariṣchandra sent people everywhere to search for his son, but to no avail. Varuṇa came again demanding that Hariṣchandra fulfill his promise. Hariṣchandra explained that his son went away and was not found in spite of his best efforts. Varuṇa became angry with Hariṣchandra

and caused him to become ill. A year passed with Hariṣchandra suffering from his illness. Rōhita, roaming in the forest, came to know of his father's illness. With love for his father overcoming his fear of death, Rōhita decided to go home. On his way, Indra*, disguised as a Brahmin, accosted him and said "You are foolishly rushing to your death. As soon as you reach home, you will be sacrificed in the fire. Instead, if you wait until your father dies before going home, you will be safe." Thus dissuaded, Rōhita stayed in the forest another year. News came to him again that his father was suffering excruciating pain from his illness. Rōhita prepared to go home again and Indra again talked him out of it.

Meanwhile, unable to bear his illness, Hariṣchandra consulted the Guru of his Sūrya dynasty, Sage Vasishṭha, on how to combat the disease. Vasishṭha explained to him that there are ten different kinds of "children" that meet criteria of his promise to Varuṇa. One of them, other than a natural-born one, was a boy who is bought from his parents for money. Hariṣchandra dispatched his minister to seek and buy a boy. He found a very poor Brahmin, Ajīgarta, who had three sons. The minister said to the Brahmin "The king needs a boy to be the sacrificial animal for his Yāga. If you give him one of your sons, he will give you a hundred cows." The Brahmin, his family suffering the pangs of severe starvation, decided to sell one of his sons. He did not want to give up the eldest, heir to the religious rites of the family and his wife was very fond of the youngest. He, therefore, offered his middle son, Ṣunaṣṣēpha, in return for one hundred cows. Ṣunaṣṣēpha was taken to the Yāga hall and tied to a post. The poor boy was wailing loudly, terrified for his fate. Sage Viṣvāmitra arrived and, taking

pity on the boy about to be killed, tried to dissuade Hariṣchandra from using Ṣunaṣṣēpha as a sacrificial animal. Hariṣchandra was not persuaded by Viṣvāmitra's assurance that his objective, of regaining his health, could be achieved without sacrificing a human. Upset that Hariṣchandra could not be stopped from his inhumane plan, Viṣvāmitra went to Ṣunaṣṣēpha, taught him a Mantra designed to please Varuṇa (*the God of Rain*) and asked him to silently chant the Mantra. Almost immediately, Varuṇa appeared and forgave Hariṣchandra for his failure to abide by his promise. Hariṣchandra's illness was cured without the sacrifice of Ṣunaṣṣēpha. Learning of his father's recovery and the passing of the danger to his own life, Rōhita returned and was welcomed by his rejoicing family. *Dēvī Bhāgavata*

Once, a discussion arose in Indra's Sabha (*court*) as to who never speaks anything but the truth. Sage Vasishṭha stated that King Hariṣchandra, on earth was such a man. Sage Viṣvāmitra, who had an on-going feud with Vasishṭha as well as his run-in with Hariṣchandra, spoke up, saying "What is so great about this Hariṣchandra? Vasishṭha spoke like that because he is Hariṣchandra's priest. Is Hariṣchandra always truthful?" He then vowed that he will make Hariṣchandra lie. Vasishṭha and Viṣvāmitra wagered their spiritual power earned by Tapas* on the outcome. After some time, Viṣvāmitra visited Hariṣchandra and told him that he is planning a Yāga, and will need considerable wealth for it. Hariṣchandra agreed to give him whatever he needed (*in Purāṇic times, a king was obliged to grant anything requested by a Muni or even an ordinary Brahmin*). Viṣvāmitra said "Keep it with you for now. I will take it when I need it" and went away.

A few days later, some citizens of his kingdom came to Hariṣchandra and complained that wild animals were destroying their crops. Hariṣchandra went to the forest to hunt the wild animals. As he was resting after an exhausting hunt, two girls of the untouchable caste came and performed a dance in front of him. As he was about to give them a reward, they said they wanted to make love to him instead. Hariṣchandra rejected their advances and sent them away with some good advice. The girls went to Viṣvāmitra and complained to him that Hariṣchandra harassed them. Viṣvāmitra (*perhaps opportunistically*) showed outrage at Hariṣchandra's ill-treatment of the girls who were like daughters to him and demanded that Hariṣchandra should make them happy. Hariṣchandra replied "I will even give you my kingdom but I will not break my vow of monogamy." Viṣvāmitra said "In that case, give me your kingdom." Hariṣchandra immediately gave his kingdom to Viṣvāmitra (*with the proper religious rite involving sacred water symbolizing the transfer*) and he left the city with his wife and son. Viṣvāmitra then demanded the wealth Hariṣchandra had earlier promised him. Hariṣchandra told him "I just gave away my entire kingdom and have no wealth. I will sell my wife and give the proceeds to you but I need some time." Viṣvāmitra agreed to wait, but sent his disciple Nakshatraka to stay with Hariṣchandra to ensure his compliance. Together, they headed for the city of Kāṣi*. Throughout the journey, Nakshatraka used innumerable ways to harass Hariṣchandra. He kept trying to make Hariṣchandra break his promise by constantly telling him "Just say you did not promise to give money to Viṣvāmitra. I will go away and your troubles will end." Hariṣchandra never faltered in his resolve to

keep his word.

When they reached Kāṣi, Hariṣchandra was able to sell his wife Chandramati to a Brahmin named Kauṣika, but the price was not sufficient to clear his debt to Viṣvāmitra. Hariṣchandra told Nakshatraka to sell him as well. Finally, he was able to pay off the money promised to Viṣvāmitra by selling himself to an untouchable man, Vīrabāhu, who owned a cemetery.

Hariṣchandra's troubles did not end, though. Determined to make him stray from the truth, Viṣvāmitra kept creating problems for him. Hariṣchandra's job at the cemetery was to collect a fee from the relatives of dead people before allowing them to cremate the body. His son Rōhita died of a snake-bite. After finishing all the chores at the house of the Brahmin who had bought her, Chandramati took her dead son's body to the cemetery that night. She did not have the fee to pay for the cremation, however. Hariṣchandra asked her to sell her Mangaḷasūtra (*sacred thread tied around a woman's neck at her wedding by her husband; it must be worn at all times as long as the husband is alive*) and bring the fee. Her Mangaḷasūtra had the magical property that it is not visible to anyone other than her husband. She thereby recognised that the attendant was, in fact, Hariṣchandra. They mourned their son's death together. As sad as he was, he could not cheat his owner by exempting his wife from paying the fee to cremate their child's body. So, he sent her back to sell the Mangaḷasūtra and bring the fee. As she was walking in the city, she was captured by the king's soldiers on the grounds that she had killed the king's son. A sentence of death was pronounced for her. She was taken to Hariṣchandra, whose job it would be to behead

her. Hariṣchandra knew that she was not guilty of any crime, but had to discharge his responsibility. As he raised the sword to sever his wife's head, the sword turned into a garland of flowers. Indra and the Dēvas appeared in front of Hariṣchandra. Viṣvāmitra also came and admitted that he could not make Hariṣchandra tell an untruth or break a promise. *Mārkanḍēya Purāṇa*

Harita I – Son of Yauvanāṣva and grandson of Ambarīsha. His sons were the Angirasas. *Vishṇu Purāṇa*

Harita II – Son of Rōhita. His son was Champu. *Bhāgavata*

Hārīta I – One of Sage Viṣvāmitra's elder fifty sons. He refused to accept the Sage's adopted son, Ṣunaṣṣēpha, as his older brother, and was given a Ṣāpa*. *Bhāgavata*

Hārīta II – A Muni. He taught the path to Mukti*. He taught Dharma (*the righteous path*) which included not intending harm to any one, friendship, equality, kindness and the ability to not be upset by criticism or being elated by praise. *Mahā Bhārata*

Hārīta III – Son of Yauvanāṣva. *Bhāgavata*

Harivarṇa – Son of Āgnīdhra. The kingdom he ruled was known as Harivarsha in his name. *Vishṇu Purāṇa*

Harivāsa – A city in the north. Arjuna passed through here during his Digvijaya (*meaning 'Victory in all directions', tour of world conquest*). *Mahā Bhārata*

Haryaṣva I – Son of Dṛḍhāṣva. His son was Nikumbha. *Bhāgavata*

Haryaṣva II – Son of Anaraṇya. His son was Aruṇa. *Bhāgavata*

Haryaṣvas – Sons of Daksha Prajāpati* and his wife Asikni. Their father directed them to propagate the species. As they were preparing to do so, Sage Nārada met them and said "Why do you want to get entangled in family life? Look for the path to Mukti* instead." They refrained from activities designed to create more people. *Bhāgavata*

Hasti I – Son of Suhōtra and his wife Suvarṇa, daughter of King Ikshvāku (*ancestor of Lord Rāma*). His wife was Yaṣōdhara. Vikunṭhana, Ajamīḍha, Dwimīḍha, and Purumīḍha were their sons. The city of Hastināpura (*capital of the Kaurava empire*) was named for him. *Mahā Bhārata*

Hasti II – An (articulate) elephant. In a previous life, he was one of the Pramathas (*servants*) of Lord Ṣiva named Hasti. Once, while Ṣiva and His Consort Pārvati were in their Antahpura*, he entered their bedroom disregarding the warnings of the door-keepers. A furious Pārvati, saying "Since you charged in here like a drunken elephant, become an elephant", She gave him a Ṣāpa*. When he begged for a means of release from the Ṣāpa, She said "You will worship a Ṣiva Linga* in the Gaja forest. A serpent, Kāḷa, will keep removing the Patra (*leaves, the offering preferred by Ṣiva*) and flowers you place on the Linga. You and the serpent will have a fight and you will both attain Mukti*. (*Ṣrī Kāḷahasti Māhātmyam is a 'Sthala Purāṇa'**.) *Ṣrī Kāḷahasti Māhātmyam*

Hatahavya – Son of Dhara and brother of Draviḷa. *Mahā Bhārata*

Hāṭaka – One of the countries Arjuna included in his Digvijaya (*meaning 'Victory in all directions', tour of world conquest*). There is a lake named Mānasa in this country. *Mahā Bhārata*

Havirbhu – Daughter of Sage Kardama. Wife of Pulastya. *Bhāgavata*

Havirdhāna I – Son of King Pṛthu. His wife was Dhishaṇa. Their sons included Prāchīnabarhi, Sānga, and Yama (*different from the God of Death*). *Matsya Purāṇa*

Havirdhāna II – Son of King Vijitāṣva and husband of Havirdhāni. He succeeded to the throne after Vijitāṣva. He had six sons, Barhishmada, Gaya, Ṣukla, Kṛshṇa, Satya, and Jitavrata. *Bhāgavata*

Havirdhāna III – Son of Antirthāna. *Bhāgavata*

Havirthāna IV – Son of Arthi. *Brahmānḍa Purāṇa*

Havya - Son of Priyavrata, king of Ṣāka Dwīpa (*Sanskrit for 'island'*). Sukumāra, Maṇīvaka, Kusumōttara, Mōdaka, and Mahādruma were his sons. *Brahmānḍa Purāṇa*

Havyavāhu – Son of Vasu named Dhara. *Matsya Purāṇa*

Hayagrīva I – Lord Vishṇu. Exhausted after his long battle with Asuras*, Vishnu placed His strung bow under his head and fell asleep. Meanwhile, the Dēvas performed Yāgas and were looking for Vishṇu to receive His share of the Havya*. After a long search, they found Him sleeping. The Dēvas, including Lord Brahma, were afraid to disturb His sleep. Lord Ṣiva gave them an idea – if the string of His bow is cut, Vishṇu's head will move and that might wake Him up. Brahma asked an insect, Vamri, to cut the string. The insect hesitated, worrying that it is a sin to disturb His sleep, but agreed to do it when Brahma promised to provide the food it needs every day. The insect bit through the string. As the tight

string broke, the whiplash effect severed Vishṇu's head (*there was a Ṣāpa* by Lakshmi to this effect*). Indra* and the Dēvas were devastated with grief. They prayed to Dēvi (*the Supreme Being*). Dēvi appeared and saying it did not happen without a reason (*needed to kill the Asura, also named Hayagrīva*), suggested that they should bring a horse's head and attach it to His neck. The Dēvas commissioned Viṣvakarma* to create a horse's neck and head. The head was attached to Vishṇu's body. Vishṇu thus acquired the name Hayagrīva (*Sanskrit for 'one with a horse's neck'*). He killed the Asura Hayagrīva. *Dēvī Bhāgavata*

Hayagrīva II – An Asura*. He performed Tapas* for a very long time, directed towards Dēvi. She appeared and asked him to choose a boon. When he asked that he shall be exempt from death, She told him that is not possible and asked him to make a different wish. He then said if he had to die, it shall be at the hands of someone who was also a Hayagrīva (*Sanskrit for 'one with a horse's neck'*). Dēvi granted his wish. Armed by the boon, he was arrogantly harassing the Dēvas. Lord Vishṇu who happened to be a Hayagrīva at the time, killed him. *Dēvī Bhāgavata*

Hayahaya – Son born to Lord Vishṇu and His Consort Lakshmi when they made love while they were in the form of horses. They left him in the Āṣram of Turvasa and returned to their abode. Seeing a small child near the Āṣram of Turvasa, a Vidyādhara (*semi-divine beings with special magical powers*) named Chapa picked him up in his arms, and not knowing whose child he was, took him to Indra*. Indra told him that the child was the son of Lord Vishṇu, that Yayāti's son would come looking for him, and asked him to leave the child on the banks of the Kāḷindi river.

Chapa did as Indra instructed. Yayāti's son prayed to Lord Vishṇu wishing for a son. Vishṇu appeared and told him that a child who would be his son is on the banks of the Kāḷindi river and that he should raise the child. Accordingly, Yayāti's son found the child, brought him home and raised him as his son. One day, Hayahaya, walking along the shore of the Ganga river, saw a woman weeping. He approached her and asked "Who are you? Why are you crying?" She replied "Sir! My name is Yaṣōmati. An Asura* named Kālakētu abducted my friend Ēkāvaḷi, daughter of Raibhya and hid her in Pātāḷa (*Sanskrit for 'netherworld'*). I went there with her. The Asura put her under guard and is pressuring her to marry him. My friend told him that since her father vowed that he would give her in marriage to Hayahaya, she could not agree to marry anyone else. I came here and prayed to Dēvi. She told me that Hayahaya will rescue her." Hayahaya told her "I am Hayahaya. How do we get to Pātāḷa?" Yaṣōmati, who had spiritual power due to Mantras, took him to Pātāḷa. Hayahaya killed Kālakētu and married Ēkāvaḷi. *Dēvī Bhāgavata*

Hēhaya – Son of Ṣatrujit, of the Yādava (*cowherds*) dynasty. *Bhāgavata*

Hēma – Wife of Maya*. The Dēvas, pleased by Maya's qualities, gave her to him. Maya built a great city in her name. Sons named Māyāvi and Dundubhi and a daughter named Mandōdari were born to her. After some time, the Dēvas called her back. She left her husband and children and went back to heaven. *Uttara Rāmāyaṇa*

Hēmachandra – Son of King Viṣāla and father of Suchandra.

Rāmāyaṇa

Hēmakuṇḍala – A Vaiṣya (*caste of merchants, third in the hierarchy below Brahmins and Kshatriyas*) in the Kṛta Yuga (*an epoch, the first of four forming a repeating cycle – the other three being Trēta, Dwāpara and Kali. We are now in a Kali Yuga*). He was wealthy and lived a Dharma (*righteous*) life. Ṣrīkuṇḍala and Vikuṇḍala were his sons. *Padma Purāṇa*

Hēmapadmākara – A lake south-east of the city of Madhura (*city in south India, different from Mathura, in north India where Lord Kṛshṇa lived for many years after killng His evil uncle Kamsa*). Once, the people there prayed to Lord Ṣiva because they did not have water to perform worship to Him in the form of Abhishēka (*pouring various liquids pleasing to Him*) on His Linga*. Ṣiva appeared and using His Triṣūla (*trident*), He created a lake. He then filled it with Ganga in His hair and made Hēmapadma (*golden lotuses*) grow in it. The lake thereby got the name Hēmapadmākara. *Skānda Purāṇa*

Hēmavarma I – Younger brother of King Virāṭa (*in whose kingdom the Pānḍavas spent their year incognito*). *Mahā Bhārata*

Hēmavarma II – King of country of Daṣārṇa. It was his daughter who was married to Ṣikhanḍi, who at the time was also a woman (*daughter of King Drupada*), by Sage Nārada's trickery. Informed of the deceit by a maidservant, Hēmavarma questioned King Drupada about his 'son-in-law's' gender but did not receive a response. Hēmavarma then invaded Drupada's city with his army. Drupada and his wife went into hiding. Ṣikhanḍi went into a forest and prepared to immolate herself in a fire. A Yaksha (*semi-divine*

beings with magical powers, ruled by Kubēra, the God of Wealth) named Sthūlakarṇa lived nearby. The Yaksha, noticing Ṣikhanḍi's attempted suicide, asked "Sir, why are you trying to kill yourself? Tell me what you need and I will help you." She explained the situation she had found herself in and that becoming a man was the only way she can be saved. The Yaksha, using his magical powers, gave his maleness to her and became a woman. Ṣikhanḍi went home and explained to her parents how she is now a man. The parents proved their offspring's maleness using civilized procedures to the king of Daṣārṇa, arranged a magnificent feast and bade farewell to Hēmavarma. *Mahā Bhārata*

Hēti – Son of Swāyambhu Manu*. Brother of Prahēti. The two brothers defeated Indra* and the Dēvas. When the Dēvas complained to Lord Vishṇu, He came and defeated the brothers. Hēti married Bhaya, sister of Kāla. Hēti's daughter was Sukēṣi. She, and her uncle's daughter Mitrakēṣi, were strolling in the garden of Kubēra (*God of Wealth*) accompanied by companions including Ratnavati and Kadaḷika, when they saw a king named Durjaya, and fell in love with him. Hēti learned of this from Sukēṣi's companions. He gave her in marriage to Durjaya. Hēti's son was Vidyutkēṣa. *Varāha Purāṇa; Uttara Rāmāyaṇa*

Hiḍimba – An Asura*. He saw the Pānḍavas as they were sleeping after escaping from the house of wax, and asked Hiḍimbi to kill them and cook them for his meal. When Hiḍimbi did not return, he himself went to the Pānḍavas, intending to kill them. But Bhīma battled him and killed him. *Mahā Bhārata*

Hiḍimbi – Younger sister of Asura* named Hiḍimba. Hiḍimba saw

the Pāṇḍavas as they were sleeping after escaping from the house of wax, and asked Hiḍimbi to kill them and cook them for his meal. Hiḍimbi approached them, and when she saw Bhīma on guard duty up on a tree, she fell madly in love with him. She assumed the form of a beautiful human female, and asked Bhīma to take her as his wife. Bhīma scornfully rejected her. She begged Kunti and Bhīma, promised to take care of them, and still wanted Bhīma as her husband even after he killed her brother Hiḍimba. Dharmarāja told Bhīma to accede to her request. Sage Vyāsa, who came to visit the Pāṇḍavas, on seeing Hiḍimbi, informed them that her name was Kamalapālika and that she will be faithful to Bhīma and have a son by him. Bhīma married her (*each of the Pāṇḍavas had at least one wife he did not share with his brothers, in addition to Draupadi, shared by all five*). A son, Ghaṭōtkacha, was born to them. *Mahā Bhārata*

Himavanta – A mountain king (*in the Purāṇas, mountains are anthropomorphed into men*). He wished to extend his lineage. The Dēvas approached the Pitṛ Dēvas (*spirits of his ancestors*) and told them that Himavanta wished to get married, and that it will be beneficial to everyone. They requested permission from the Pitṛ Dēvas for him to marry Mēnaka (*mind-born daughter of Pitṛ Dēvas, different from the famous Apsara**), and with their approval the two were married. Afterwards, Lord Vishṇu and other Dēvas came to his house and informed him that Lord Ṣiva's Consort, Sati, will be born as his daughter. They all prayed to Ṣiva. Sons including Maināka and a daughter Pārvati were born to Himavanta. Once, when Sage Nārada visited Himavanta, he showed the Sage his daughter's horoscope, and asked what kind

of husband she will have. Nārada said that all the signs look good but that her husband will be Digambara (*meaning 'whose clothes are the directions' or naked*) and would live on a Smaṣāna (*cremation ground*). Himavanta and Mēnaka were slightly upset. But then Nārada explained that Pārvati's husband will be Lord Ṣiva and stressed that they should give their daughter in marriage only to Ṣiva. Himavanta performed Tapas* and prayed to Ṣiva and brought Him to his house and performed Pārvati's marriage to Him. *Ṣiva Purāṇa*

Hiraṇvanta – Son of Āgnīdhra. He ruled the kingdom of Hiraṇya Varsha. *Vishṇu Purāṇa*

Hiraṇvati – A river. The Pānḍava army was camped on the banks of this river during the Mahā Bhārata war. *Mahā Bhārata*

Hiraṇya – An Asura*. Father of Mahāṣani. *Brahmānḍa Purāṇa*

Hiraṇyadhanva – A tribal chief. Father of Ēkalavya. *Mahā Bhārata*

Hiraṇyakaṣipu – Son of Diti (*Diti's sons were known as Daityas, a synonym for Asuras**). He and his brother, Hiraṇyāksha, were formerly Lord Vishṇu's door-keepers, Jaya and Vijaya. They were born as Asuras due to a Ṣāpa*. Even among Asuras, there were none more vicious and cruel than these two. They used to chew and swallow humans and Dēvas as if they were blades of grass. They terrified all three worlds (*Swarga or heaven, earth, and Pātāḷa or the netherworld*). When Hiraṇyāksha rolled the earth up like a blanket, Vishṇu took the Varāha Avatāra (*form of a boar, the third incarnation*) and killed him. From then on, Hiraṇyakaṣipu was determined to kill Vishṇu.

Hiraṇyakaṣipu performed Tapas* directed towards Lord Brahma for many years, and received a boon from him that he will not be killed: by the living or the inanimate; by Dēvas, Asuras or humans; at night or during the day; in water or on land. While he was performing Tapas, his wife Līlāvati stayed in Sage Nārada's Āṣram. She gave birth to a son, Prahlāda there.

Hiraṇyakaṣipu had another wife, Datta, daughter of Jambhāsura. He also had sons Anuhlāda, Samhlāda and Hlāda in addition to Prahlāda.

After completing his Tapas, and emboldened by the boon which he thought would make him invulnerable, he was harassing the three worlds. He was dictating to everyone that Vishṇu is not eligible to be worshipped, that he himself was. He set about killing anyone caught worshipping Vishṇu. Hiraṇyakaṣipu engaged two sons of Ṣukra (*the Guru of the Asuras*), Chanḍa and Amārka to teach Prahlāda. Regardless of what they tried to teach, Prahlāda kept praising Vishṇu. Hiraṇyakaṣipu tried every way he could think of to stop Prahlāda from extolling Vishṇu. He had him bitten by snakes and stepped on by elephants. Not only was Prahlāda not the least bit harmed, he never gave up his devotion to Vishṇu. Finally, in sheer desperation, Hiraṇyakaṣipu kicked a pillar in his palace and said to Prahlāda "Since you claim that Vishṇu is everywhere, show him to me in this pillar." Vishṇu came out of the pillar in the form of Narasimha (*Nara is Sanskrit for 'human'; Simha is 'lion'; in this the fourth incarnation of Vishṇu, he had a human frame with a lion's head and claws*) and without violating any of the restrictions imposed by Brahma's boon, balanced Hiraṇyakaṣipu on his feet and tore him apart with the lion's claws,

in the middle of a doorway, as the Sun was setting. *Bhāgavata*

Hiraṇyāksha – Son of Diti and brother of Hiraṇyakaṣipu. He and his brother, Hiraṇyakaṣipu, were formerly Lord Vishṇu's door-keepers, Jaya and Vijaya. They were born as Asuras* due to a Ṣāpa*. Even among Asuras, there were none more vicious and cruel than these two. They used to chew and swallow humans and Dēvas as if they were blades of grass. They terrified all three worlds (*Swarga or heaven, earth, and Pātāḷa or the netherworld*). Upadānavi, daughter of Vaiṣvānara, was his wife. Ulūka, Ṣakuni (*different from Duryōdhana's uncle*), Bhūtasantāpasa, and Mahānābha were their sons.

Hiraṇyāksha rolled the earth up like a blanket and pushed it into Pātāḷa, the netherworld. He was on his way to Swarga (*heaven*), threatening to kill Vishṇu. Sage Nārada encountered him on the way and told him that Vishṇu was in the form of Varāha (*a boar, Vishṇu's third incarnation*) in Pātāḷa. Vishṇu had taken the Varāha incarnation to kill Hiraṇyāksha and rescue the earth. Hiraṇyāksha went to Vishṇu, battled Him and was killed by Him. *Bhāgavata*

Hiraṇyanābha I – A king of the Raghu dynasty (*the most illustrious of whom was Lord Rāma*). Son of Vyushitāṣva. His son was Kauṣalya. *Raghu Vamṣa*

Hiraṇyanābha II – Son of Kōsala. He learnt Sāma Vēda from Sumanta, disciple of Jaimini, and taught it to Āvantyas and Udīchyas who were learned in the nature of the Supreme Being. *Bhāgavata*

Hiraṇyanābha III – Son of Vidhṛti. He learnt 'Adhyātma Yōga' (*Sanskrit for 'concentration of the mind on the Atma', or soul*)

from Sage Yāgjnyavalkya, disciple of Jaimini, and became a Yōga Guru. His son was Pushya. *Bhāgavata*

Hlāda – Son of Hiraṇyakaṣipu. His wife was Damani. Vātāpi and Ilvala were their sons (see **Agastya**). *Bhāgavata*

Hōtravāhana – A Rājarshi (*royal Sage*). Grandfather of Amba. After Sālva rejected her (*Bhīshma learnt after he forcibly brought Amba and her sisters from their Swayamvara*, that Amba's heart had already been pledged to Sālva, he sent her to Sālva, but citing the fact that she was taken from him to become someone else's wife, Sālva said he could not accept her*), Amba encountered her grandfather Hōtravāhana and told him about the humiliation she suffered after Bhīshma abducted her and her sisters. Hōtravāhana advised her to seek the help of Paraṣurāma (*the sixth Avatāra or incarnation of Lord Vishṇu*). A Sage named Akṛtavraṇa informed Amba and her grandfather that Paraṣurāma was expected to come to that place the next day. They waited until the next day and met Paraṣurāma. Hōtravāhana detailed to Paraṣurāma the injustice to Amba perpetrated by Sālva and Bhīshma. *Mahā Bhārata*

Hūhū – A Gandharva*. He once offended Dēvala who gave him a Ṣāpa* that he will become a crocodile. He became a crocodile and tried to pull Gajēndra (*Sanskrit for 'king of elephants'*) into the lake and was released from the Ṣāpa when Lord Vishṇu killed the crocodile. *Bhāgavata*

– I –

Iḍa – Once upon a time, Lord Brahma performed a Yāga named Srata in order to increase the population of the world. Iḍa was His wife at the time. *Brahmānḍa Purāṇa*

Idhmajihva – Son of Priyavrata. He was the ruler of an island named Plaksha. He had seven sons, named Ṣiva, Yaṣasya, Subhadra, Ṣānta, Kshēma, Bhaya and Amṛta. He divided Plaksha Dwīpa (*Sanskrit for 'island'*) into seven parts and made each of his sons the king of one part. *Bhāgavata*

Idhmavāhu I – Son of Agastya and Lōpāmudra. He was bright as fire. He used to bring kindling for sacred fire for his father. *Bhāgavata*

Idhmavāhu II – Son of Dhṛḍhasya, who was Lōpāmudra's son. He was also called Tējasvi. *Mahā Bhārata*

Ikshvāku I – Son of Kshutāni, grandson of the Manu* in the Kṛta Yuga (*epoch; first of four in a cycle called a Kalpa – followed by Trēta, Dwāpara, and Kali, which is the current Yuga*). He had a hundred sons of whom the eldest was Vimṣa. *Mahā Bhārata*

Ikshvāku II – Son of Vaivasvata Manu*. Progenitor of Ṣrī Rāma's dynasty. One day, when the Manu sneezed, Ikshvāku was born from his nose. Ikshvāku had a hundred sons. Of these, Vikukshi,

Nimi, and Danḍaka were the three eldest. One day, Ikshvāku asked his eldest son to bring a clean piece of meat for a funeral rite he planned to perform to propitiate his ancestors. The son, tired from the hunt, ate part of a hare, and brought the rest. Sage Vasishṭha (*royal priest of the Sūrya dynasty of which Ikshvāku was the progenitor*) refused to use the unclean meat, it being unsuitable for the rite. Ikshvāku, angered by his son's misdeed, exiled him from his kingdom. Ikshvāku also had a daughter Suvarṇa.

Vikukshi succeeded to the throne after Ikshvāku's death. *Bhāgavata*

Ikshvāku III – King of Ayōdhya. He had two hundred horses which were white all over except for one blue ear. A Muni named Gālava came to him accompanied by Mādhavi, daughter of King Yayāti, and asked for the horses in exchange for her. He told Ikshvāku that she would remain a virgin even after having childen. Ikshvāku accepted her and gave his horses to Gālava. Ikshvāku and Mādhavi had a son named Vasumanas. *Mahā Bhārata*

Ila I – Daughter of Vāyu (*the God of Wind*). Wife of Dhruva. Her son was Utkaḷa. *Bhagavata*

Ila II – Son of Kardama Once, he went hunting in the forest and reached the place frequented by Lord Ṣiva and Pārvati, especially when they were romantically inclined. Lord Ṣiva at that time had taken female form. When Ila saw Him in a female form, Ila and his retinue became women. Ila prayed to Ṣiva who told him to request anything other than his manhood. Deciding that it is no use praying to Him, Ila prayed to Pārvati. Pārvati granted that Ila will alternate monthly between male and female. When Ila and servants, while

they were women, were bathing in a lake, Budha* saw her and desired her. She and Budha had a son named Purūrava. Ila performed a Yāga and regained permanent manhood. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Ila III – Daughter of Vaivasvata Manu*. Vaivasvata performed a Yāga wishing for a son. His wife, desiring to have a daughter, sought the help of the Hōta (*priest officiating at a Yāga*). During the Yāga, with the oblation in hand, the Hōta chanted the Mantra for a daughter instead of for a son. A daughter named Ila was born to the Manu's wife. Vaivasvata went to his Guru, Vasishṭha, and demanded to know why a daughter was born when he performed the Yāga to beget a son. Vasishṭha revealed to him what the Hōta had done. Vasishṭha himself then prayed to Lord Ṣiva and requested Him to change Ila into a boy. Lord Ṣiva granted his wish. Ila became a boy named Sudyumna. Sudyumna had sons named Utkaḷa, Gaya and Vimala.

Sudyumna became king. One day he went to the Kumāra Vana (*forest*) where Lord Ṣiva and His Consort Pārvati relax. As soon as he entered the forest, he became a woman, Ila. Ila, wandering in the forest, met Budha*. The two fell in love with each other. Ila became pregnant and gave birth to a son named Purūrava. Remembering who she used to be, she was upset with being a woman and mother. She then 'thought of'* Vasishṭha and he appeared. Vasishṭha prayed to Lord Ṣiva and requested Him to change Ila back into a man. Pleased with Vasishṭha but not willing to violate the spell put on the forest by Pārvati, Lord Ṣiva granted that Ila will alternate between male and female (*being Sudyumna for a month, followed by being Ila for a month, back to Sudyumna and so on*). *Bhāgavata*

Ilabila I – Daughter of Tṛṇabindu and a Dēva female named Alambasa. Viṣravasu married her. Kubēra (*the God of Wealth*) was their son. *Bhāgavata*

Ilabila II – Daughter of Tṛṇabindu. She had a daughter named Alambasa. Tṛṇabindu himself married Alambasa. Alambasa had a daughter named Ilabila, and sons including one named Viṣāla. *Vishṇu Purāṇa*

Ilabila III– Son of Mūlaka. His son was Khaṭvānga Dilīpa. *Vishṇu Purāṇa*

Ilāvṛta – Son of Āgnīdhra. He ruled a Varsha (*country*) in Jambū Dwīpa (*island or peninsula*). The country came to be known as Ilāvṛtavarsha in his honour. *Vishṇu Purāṇa*

Ilāvṛtavarsha – A country in Jambū Dwīpa. It is north of Nishadha, Hēmakūṭa and Himalaya mountains. It got its name from Ilāvṛta, son of Āgnīdhra. *Bhāgavata*

Ilvala – An Asura*. Son of Viprajitti and Simhika. (*Also thought to be Durvāsa's son by Ajamukhi or Surasa*) He had a brother named Vātāpi. He once requested a Brahmin to teach him a Mantra that would grant him anything he wished for. (*Alternate version is that he asked Brahmins to give him the means to have a son that rivals Indra* but was rebuffed*) Failing to obtain his wish, he nursed a grudge against all Brahmins. The brothers were harassing Brahmins, who complained to Agastya. Hearing that Ilvala had enormous wealth, Agastya, accompanied by three kings, came to Ilvala. Ilvala greeted them with respect and invited them to have dinner first. According to his practice, he had his shape-shifting brother Vātāpi turn into a lamb, had him cooked and served as

dinner for Agastya. Once a Brahmin guest ate Vātāpi, Ilvala would say "Come, Vātāpi" and Vātāpi would tear the Brahmin's stomach, killing the Brahmin, and come out. Realizing that Ilvala and his brother were killing Brahmins in this manner, Agastya rubbed his stomach and said "Be digested, Vātāpi". Vātāpi was digested inside Agastya's stomach. Ilvala was sad when he realized that his brother was now really dead, but pretended not to know what had just happened. He asked Agastya and the kings who accompanied him the purpose of their visit, and gave them the money they sought. *Mahā Bhārata*

Indīvarāksha – Son of a Gandharva* king named Nalanābha. A sibling of Varūdhini (see **Pravarākhya**). He asked a Muni named Brahmamitra, who was teaching the medical science Āyurvēda to his disciples, to teach it to him also. When the Muni refused to teach him, he used his magical power to become invisible, and learned along with the Muni's disciples. Becoming visible again, he ridiculed the Muni. The Muni said "Since you acquired your knowledge by deceit, you will become an Asura*". He became an Asura and was about to devour his own daughter Manōrama. Hearing her cries, Svarōchi (*son of Varūdhini*) fended him off to protect the girl. When Svarōchi deployed a weapon named Āgnēyāstra, Indīvarāksha was released from the Asura form and returned to his original form. *Mārkanḍēya Purāṇa*

Indra* – One of the Dikpālakas*. In addition to being the ruler of East, he is also the Lord of Dēva Lōka (*Swarga or heaven*). Indra* is not anyone's name but a positional title. Whoever is in that position at the time is called Indra. The position changes hands by the Manvantara (*the reign of a Manu**) or by the actions of the

incumbent. One can become Indra by performing one hundred Yāgas or ritual sacrifices. Suṣānta was the Indra in the Uttama epoch; Vibhu in the Raivata epoch; Manōjava in the Chākshusha epoch. Nahusha became Indra at one time, but lost the position in disgrace after a short reign.

When there was a great war between the Dēvas and Asuras and the Dēvas won a decisive victory, they assumed that the victory was totally their own achievement. They were unaware of the existence of Para Brahma*. The Supreme Being appeared to them but they did not realize who He was. They sent both Agni and Vāyu to find out who He was, but neither of them knew Him. When Indra went to see who He was, He disappeared and a beautiful woman, Uma was there. Indra asked her who the magical person (*Yaksha, semi-divine entities with magical powers such as appearing and disappearing at will*) was, who had just disappeared. She told him that He was Para Brahma and that He was the reason the Dēvas won their victory. Indra, Agni and Vāyu attained premier status among the Dēvas because they stood in the proxility of the Supreme Being. Indra became the Chief of the Dēvas because he was the first to know the Supreme Being. *Kēnōpanishad*

Indra was the son of Aditi. Lord Vishṇu was born to Aditi as Indra's younger brother (*thereby acquiring the name Upēndra*). Indra's wife was Ṣachī Dēvi. They had a son named Jayanta and a daughter named Jayanti. Indra's transport is an elephant named Airāvata. The elephant and his horse named Ucchaiṣrava emerged from the ocean of milk. His weapon was the Vajrāyudha (*a thunderbolt, Indra's signature weapon, literally 'weapon of*

diamond').

Indra was protecting Amṛtam* with elaborate security arrangements in heaven. Once Garutmanta* got past all the security barriers, stole some Amṛtam and was flying away. When Indra shot the Vajrāyudha at him, only one feather from one of Garutmanta's wings was dislodged. Realizing what a powerful being Garutmanta was, Indra made friends with him and begged him not to give Amṛtam to other than divine beings. But bound by a promise to give Amṛtam to his half-brothers, the sons of Kadruva, to release his mother from slavery to Kadruva, he took some Amṛtam to them. While the sons of Kadruva were bathing (*to purify themselves*) before drinking the Amṛtam, Indra stole it back and returned it to the secure place and put it under guard again.

When Kunti wanted a son, she used the Mantra which Sage Durvāsa had taught her, to invoke Indra. Indra was pleased and gave her a son, Arjuna. Indra provided support and assistance to his son Arjuna in various ways. When Arjuna performed Tapas* seeking divine weapons, Indra appeared, told him that only Lord Ṣiva could give him the weapons and advised him to pray to Lord Ṣiva. He invited Arjuna to Amarāvati (*Indra's city in heaven*). When Ūrvaṣi gave Arjuna a Ṣāpa* that he would become a eunuch, Indra explained to Arjuna how he could benefit from the Ṣāpa during Agjnātavāsa (*the year the Pāṇḍavas had to be incognito*).

Indra knew that as long as Karṇa had the earrings and body armor with which he was born, Arjuna would be incapable of defeating him. So, disguised as a Brahmin, he went to Karṇa and

begged for his earrings and body armor (*Karṇa had the reputation that he would never deny to a Brahmin anything he desires*). Unable to say no, Karṇa gave him what he asked for. Indra then revealed himself and gave Karṇa the use of his divine power, but limited its use to one time.

A king named Bhangāsvana performed a Yāga that would enable him to have sons. A hundred sons were born as a result of the Yāga. As it happened, the Yāga was not to Indra's liking and Indra was angry with Bhangāsvana. One day when Bhangāsvana went hunting in the forest, Indra created an illusion that disoriented Bhangāsvana and made him go far away. The long walk having made Bhangāsvana thirsty, he waded into a lake and drank some water. As he left the lake, he found himself transformed into a woman. Ashamed to return to the kingdom as a woman, she stayed in the forest. While in the forest, she had many sons. These sons joined the sons Bhangāsvana had earlier sired, and the kingdom became stronger. Upset that his attempt to cause harm to Bhangāsvana turned out beneficial instead, Indra, disguised as a Brahmin, went to the kingdom and managed to create enmity between the sons of whom Bhangāsvana was the father and those born to Bhangāsvana after he became a woman. A battle ensued and all of them died. The woman that Bhangāsvana became, learning of the calamity, begged the Brahmin to revive her sons. Indra revealed himself and brought all the sons back to life.

Tvashta Prajāpati*, whose son was killed by Indra performed a Hōma* for the purpose of destroying him, and created an Asura* named Vṛtra. Vṛtra and Indra engaged in a fierce battle. Eventually, Indra ran away in fear and sought the protection of Lord Vishṇu.

Lord Vishṇu advised Indra that Vṛtra was very strong and a plan to kill him needs to be devised, and told Indra to make friends with Vṛtra in the meantime. Some Munis helped Indra make friends with Vṛtra. Indra pretended to be Vṛtra's friend. One evening, while the two were walking along the seashore, Indra killed Vṛtra whose guard was down due to his fascination with the surf. The sin of killing Vṛtra took the form of an ugly old man and started chasing Indra. Indra, in abject fear, ran and hid in the stalk of a lotus in a lake. The position of Indra was then given to Nahusha. Nahusha was deposed after a short reign as Indra. The position of Indra became vacant again, and the Munis, searching for Indra, located him. They invited him back, and on the advice of Agastya, had him perform a Yāga to rid him of the sin of Brahma Hatya (*murdering a Brahmin, considered very heinous*) and restored him to his position.

A king named Marut was virtuous and had wealth comparable to Indra's. His fame had spread to the ends of the earth. Indra became jealous of him. Indra got wind of the fact that Marut was planning a Yāga for which he would invite Bṛhaspati (*the Guru of the Dēvas*) to officiate as the priest. Indra went to Bṛhaspati and told him that he was going to perform a Yāga and invited Bṛhaspati to officiate as the priest and added that if a human invites Bṛhaspati, it is not proper for him to accept. Marut invited Samvarta (*Bṛhaspati's brother*) to be his priest and was performing the Yāga. With a view to disrupting Marut's Yāga, Indra asked Agni to go to Marut and suggest to him that he should get Bṛhaspati as the priest. Agni did as he was instructed. Samvarta had earlier warned Marut that if he removed Samvarta and replaced him with

someone else as the priest in the middle of the Yāga, he, Samvarta, would give Marut a Ṣāpa. Indra's intent in sending Agni with that message was precisely to subject Marut to Samvarta's Ṣāpa. But Marut completed the Yāga with Samvarta as the priest. The power of the Mantras (*used in the Yāga*) gave Indra and the other Dēvas their due share of Havya*.

A young woman named Dēvasēna was being abducted and carried away by an Asura named Kēṣi. Indra killed the Asura and rescued her. When he asked her what boon she would like, Dēvasēna told him she wants a suitable husband. Indra took her to Lord Brahma and asked him who would be a suitable husband for her. On Brahma's advice, Indra became her guardian and eventually gave her in marriage to Kumāraswāmi (*son of Lord Ṣiva*).

When Mēdhātithi was performing a Yāga, Indra went there in the form of a goat and received his share of the Havya.

When Ṣaryāti was performing a Yāga, Sage Chyavana (*Ṣaryāti's son-in-law and priest for the Yāga*) decided that they would give a share of the Havya to the Aṣvins (*twin physicians to the Dēvas*). Indra said they were ineligible to receive Havya. Chyavana argued that he would make them eligible. Indra then raised the Vajrāyudha (*a thunderbolt, Indra's signature weapon, literally 'weapon of diamond'*) to smite him. Chyavana created an Asura named Manda from the Hōma fire. Scared of the Asura, Indra begged Chyavana's forgiveness and accepted that the Aṣvins were eligible to receive Havya.

As a result of his killing Vṛtrāsura (*the Asura Vṛtra*), Indra was given a Ṣāpa that he would become a stone slab. While he was in

the form of a slab of stone, Indra prayed to Lord Vishṇu. Lord Vishṇu told him that he would be released from his Ṣāpa when He comes to give a boon to Puṇḍarīka. Indra, in the form of a stone slab, remained outside the home of Puṇḍarīka. When Lord Vishṇu came there, Puṇḍarīka was busy attending to the needs of his parents, and asked Lord Vishṇu to wait standing on the stone slab until he is finished with his task. Lord Vishṇu did so, thus releasing Indra from the Ṣāpa.

Once upon a time, Indra lost his kingdom and Prahlāda was ruling the three worlds. Indra was determined to somehow regain his position (*as the ruler of Swarga, or the heavenly abode*). He went and asked his Guru, "What should I do to regain my kingdom?" His Guru suggested that he should ask Bhārgava (*another name of Paraṣurāma – sixth incarnation of Lord Vishṇu*). Indra asked Bhārgava, who told him to ask Prahlāda. Indra disguised himself as a Brahmin and was serving Prahlāda. One day this fake Brahmin asked Prahlāda how he became ruler of all three worlds. Prahlāda said it was due to his good character and explained the power of character. Indra then said, "If that is the case, give me your character". (*Note that he was disguised as a Brahmin, and kings, even Asura kings, did not deny to Brahmins anything for which one made a request*) Prahlāda said he would accede to his request. Just then a man emerged from Prahlāda's body. Prahlāda asked him who he was. He replied that he was Prahlāda's character and since Prahlāda acceded to Indra's request, he was going to Indra. Right behind him, another man emerged from Prahlāda who said he was strength and he is going where character was going. Behind them, a young woman emerged. She

said she was Siri (*wealth*) and she will be wherever character was. Once he obtained these three, Indra regained his kingdom (*Like much of Indian mythology, the purpose of colourful stories was to teach moral lessons to those without much education; the idea here is not really that three persons representing character, strength and wealth emerged from Prahlāda's body. The lesson is that strength and wealth accrue to those of good character*).

Once, while Sage Vaivasvata was performing a ritual sacrifice named Sattra Yāga in the Naimiṣa forest (*a holy place, a haven for many great Sages*), human beings stopped dying. Indra and other Dēvas then went to Lord Brahma and complained that that blurred any distinction between humans and Dēvas. Brahma reassured them that Yama (*God of Death*) will perform his duty, and that five who will be born from the semen of Dēvas woud be of assistance to Yama, and that the Dēvas should not worry. On their way back, they saw a young woman crying in the Ganga river. Astonished to see that her tears were being transformed into golden lotus flowers, Indra asked her who she was. Saying "You have to come with me if you want to find out who I am", she took Indra to where Lord Ṣiva was engaged in gambling with His Consort. At the time Lord Ṣiva was disguised as Varuṇa (*the God of Rain, one of Indra's subordinates*). Indra believing Him to be in fact Varuṇa angrily said to him, "How dare you sit on a throne in front of me and gamble?" Enraged, Lord Ṣiva said to the young woman, "He is speaking rudely, with pride. Bring him to me". As soon as she touched him, Indra fell to the earth. Lord Ṣiva ordered him, "Observe the details of this mountain, see what is here." Indra saw four others, exactly like himself. The Panchēndra (*five Indras*) thus

formed were later born as Dharmarāja, Bhīma, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadēva. *Mahā Bhārata*

Once upon a time, Indra killed the son of Viṣvakarma*, who created an Asura named Vṛtra to kill Indra. Indra first befriended and then killed Vṛtrāsura. Due to the sin of killing a Brahmin, Indra was weakened. His deceit in the episode involving Ahalya drained his strength further. At that time, Asuras were taking birth on earth and preventing ritual sacrifices from being performed. Bhūdēvi (*Goddess Earth*) complained to the Dēvas about the oppression by the Asuras. The Dēvas took birth on earth, with Indra taking five forms. These were Dharmarāja, Bhīma, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadēva. *Mārkanḍēya Purāṇa*

In spite of the fact that Indra was the premier Dēva and Lord of the Dēva Lōka, strangely enough, all his actions were selfish, envious and cowardly. He did not exhibit any of the benign qualities characteristic of Dēvas. While it is difficult to associate specific actions with a particular Indra, all of them were blameworthy. Whenever someone started performing intense Tapas, he would try to disrupt it using one of the Apsaras*. For instance, he sent Jānapadi to disrupt Ṣaradvanta's; he sent Mēnaka to disrupt Viṣvāmitra's. He sent Pramōchana to disrupt the Tapas of a Sage named Kantha. When powerful Asuras attacked, he would run to Lord Vishṇu.

Indra was constantly killing the sons of his step-mother Diti. She begged her (*and Aditi's*) husband Kaṣyapa to give her a son who could kill Indra. Kaṣyapa acceded to her wish and she became pregnant. Indra, getting wind of this, wanted to prevent his enemy from being born. He changed himself into a small boy, went to Diti

and said,"Mother, I want to be your servant and help you in any manner you wish." She trusted the boy and allowed him to do chores for her. Once, while Diti was sleeping, he entered her womb and cut her fetus into seven pieces. The pieces started to cry. He then cut each of the seven pieces into seven pieces. All the pieces were crying. Diti woke up and begged him not to kill her unborn baby. Indra came out, explained that he did what he did because her unborn baby would be his enemy, and apologised for his actions. Diti assured him that her unborn children would not be Indra's enemies but his friends. She requested Indra to protect them and handed them over to him. They were the divine beings called Maruts. Indra became their friend. *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*

Once, Indra came to know that Lord Ṣiva and His consort Pārvati were engaged in sexual activity. Concerned that a product of their union will be stronger and more powerful than himself, he conceived a notion that he should prevent them from having a son. He went to Agni and told him that Lord Ṣiva and Pārvati were making love and that he, Agni, should somehow prevent the consummation of their activity. In accordance with Indra's instructions, Agni went and stood in front of the lovemaking couple. They stopped their romantic activity when they saw Agni.

The Dēvas, alarmed and frightened by what they perceived as the arrogance of Kumāraswāmi (*son of Lord Ṣiva and Pārvati*), went to Indra and told him that Kumāraswāmi will kill him and take over his position, and that he should kill Kumāraswāmi first. Hearing these words, a frightened Indra sent the Sapta Mātṛkas (*literally, seven mothers*) with instructions to kill Kumāraswāmi. When they saw Kumāraswāmi, they were frightened by his Tējas*

and begged him for protection. Then Indra himself came to attack Kumāraswāmi. Indra deployed his thunderbolt on him. The weapon barely grazed Kumāraswāmi on his right side. A goat-faced man named Viṣākha and an army of boys emerged from that spot. Indra was frightened by the sight and sought Kumāraswāmi's protection. He offered his position as Indra and requested Kumāraswāmi to become the ruler of the Dēvas. Kumāraswāmi laughed and told Indra to retain his position but agreed to be the commander-in-chief of the Dēva army per Indra's request.

Sagaraputras (*the sons of King Sagara, an ancestor of Lord Rāma*) were harassing Munis (*Sages*) and Brahmins. The Dēvas were being starved because no Hōmas* (*from which the Dēvas receive their food, Havya*) were being performed. The Dēvas went to Lord Brahma and pleaded for His help. Brahma told them that Sagaraputras were due to be destroyed by a Muni named Kapila and that if Sagaraputras disrupted Kapila's Yōga (*religious meditation*), that will be the cause of their death. Indra then waited for an opportunity to set up this event. Sagaraputras were following Sagara's Aṣvamēdha Yāga* horse. As soon as the horse entered the ocean, the ocean dried up. Indra decided this was the opportunity he had been waiting for and asked Vāyu (*God of Wind*) to take the horse and tie it up in the Āṣram of Kapila. Vāyu did so in an instant. Sagaraputras dug up the ocean searching for the horse and found it in Kapila's underground Āṣram. Assuming that Kapila had stolen the horse and was pretending to be a Muni, they hurled abuses at him and disrupted his Yōga. Kapila opened his eyes and the fire emanating from them burned Sagaraputras to ash. *Brahma Purāṇa*

Emperor Pṛthu, with the intention of performing one hundred Aṣvamēdha Yāgas*, completed ninety nine of them on the shores of the Sarasvati river in a country named Brahmāvarta. As he started the one hundredth Yāga, Indra, wanting to remain the only performer of one hundred Aṣvamēdha Yāgas, stole the sacrificial horse. Pṛthu's son defeated Indra and brought the horse back. Indra stole the horse again. Pṛthu himself was about to pick up his bow and arrows to attack Indra. The priests officiating at the Yāga advised him that the performer of a Yāga should not touch weapons until it is finished and suggested that they can invite Indra and throw him in the fire. Pṛthu sat by the fire. Lord Brahma then came and explained that Indra is divine and should not be killed. Lord Ṣiva also arrived and said that Indra is begging to be forgiven. Pṛthu was given credit for one hundred Yāgas anyway. Pṛthu was relieved, stopped the Yāga and became a close friend of Indra.

Viṣvarūpa, created by Tvashṭa Prajāpati*, was performing Tapas with the aim of becoming Indra. Learning of this, Indra sent Rambha and other Apsaras to disrupt his Tapas. Viṣvarūpa ignored them and continued his Tapas. Then Indra himself came and cut off his three heads. Indra became tainted by the extreme sin of Brahma Hatya (*murdering a Brahmin*). Indra was able to free himself from the taint by passing it on to women, sea water, trees and the earth. When he asked these entities to accept part of the taint of Brahma Hatya, the earth demanded in return, that any fissure in it be able to heal itself; water, that anything immersed in it become purified; trees, the ability to regrow when cut down; and women, the ability to enjoy sex. Indra granted them the boons they

demanded.

The cowherds in the village where the child Kṛshṇa was growing up were celebrating Indrōtsava (*a festival in honour of Indra*). Kṛshṇa questioned the appropriateness of the festival and stopped them from continuing. He advised them to honour cows, Brahmins and mountains instead. This angered Indra who hurled a rain of stones on the cowherds. Kṛshṇa lifted the Gōvardhana mountain and directed the cows and cowherds to take shelter under it from the rain of stones. Indra realized the greatness of Kṛshṇa, came and prayed to Him. Kṛshṇa let everyone know that He acted only to cure Indra of excessive vanity. *Bhāgavata*

Once, entranced by the beauty of the Apsaras and enjoying their dance performance, Indra forgot to respectfully receive his Guru. As a consequence of that error, the Dēvas were defeated in a war against the Asuras and described their plight to Lord Brahma. He told them that their defeat was due to slighting their Guru, and advised them to accept as their Guru and serve Viṣvarūpa, the son of Tvashṭa Prajāpati*. The Dēvas were following this advice. Viṣvarūpa, who was close to the Asuras as well, was being worshipped by them also and was letting them share in the fruits of Yāgas. Upset by this, Indra cut off Viṣvarūpa's (*three*) heads. One head became a sparrow; the other two became partridges.

An Asura named Ṣūrapadma was harassing the Dēvas at one time. Kumāraswāmi killed him. Praising Kumāraswāmi for this act, Indra gave his ward Dēvasēna to him in marriage. *Skānda Purāṇa*

Once, Indra and Bṛhaspati disguised themselves as Munis and set out to visit Lord Ṣiva in Mount Kailāsa (*His abode*). Lord Ṣiva, with a view to testing them, took a terrifying form and stood naked

blocking their way. Indra ordered him to step aside to let them pass. The naked man just stood there, without answering Indra. Indra repeated his order with the same result. Indra then raised the Vajrāyudha (*a thunderbolt, Indra's signature weapon, literally 'weapon of diamond'*) to strike at the man. Lord Ṣiva immobilized Indra's arm and (*opening his third eye*) burned him down to the ground. Bṛhaspati, realizing that the naked man was Lord Ṣiva, prayed to Him and implored him to forgive Indra and save him. Lord Ṣiva, in His kindness, revived Indra. *Ṣiva Purāṇa*

Once, Indra requested King Puranjaya to help him in a war against Asuras. The king said he would come to battle riding a bull. Indra took the form of a bull. King Puranjaya fought the Asuras riding the hump of that bull.

When Māndhāta was born, Indra let the baby suckle his finger. (See **Yuvanāṣva**)

Once, as Indra was going somewhere on his elephant Airāvata along with the Dēvas, Sage Durvāsa came upto him and presented a garland of flowers to him. Indra put the garland on his elephant and the elephant threw the garland to the ground. Insulted to see the garland he presented being discarded thus, the Sage became angry and gave Indra a Ṣāpa that all his valuable possessions will be swallowed by the ocean. Amṛtam, Airāvata and his other possessions fell into the ocean. A scared Indra went and related his plight to Lord Vishṇu. Lord Vishṇu advised him to churn the ocean to retrieve his possessions. When Indra churned the ocean, Airāvata and his other possessions emerged. *Vishṇu Purāṇa*

With an Asura named Ṣamīka as the charioteer, Indra killed Jambhāsura. *Vāmana Purāṇa*

Once upon a time, the Asura Rāvaṇa attacked Indra Lōka (*Lōka is Sanskrit for world*) and defeated the Dēvas. Indra then came, defeated and captured Rāvaṇa. This enraged Rāvaṇa's son Mēghanātha who came and fighting furiously and using Asura magic powers, captured Indra. He earned the name Indrajit (*he who defeated Indra*) as a result. When Lord Brahma came and requested him to release Indra, he complied with the request.

Once upon a time, Indra saw the beautiful Ahalya and asked Brahma to give her to him in marriage. Brahma married her to Sage Gautama instead. Indra remained desirous of sleeping with her. Once, Indra took the form of a cock and crowed near Gautama's Āṣram in the middle of the night. On hearing it, Gautama thought the Sun was about to rise and left the Āṣram to go about his morning ablutions. Indra (*disguised as Gautama*) immediately entered the Āṣram and joined Ahalya in bed. Ahalya thought her husband was lying next to her. Gautama, seeing the stars in the sky, realized it was the middle of the night and returned to his Āṣram. He saw Indra in bed with his wife. Angered by Indra's misconduct, Gautama gave him a Ṣāpa that his testicles would fall off. (*When they did fall off, a goat's testicles were attached in their place*) He gave Indra another Ṣāpa, that his body would be covered with vaginas. Indra begged Gautama for forgiveness. Gautama took pity on Indra and said the vaginas covering his body will appear like eyes to others. (*Indra is known as Sahasrāksha, the one with a thousand eyes, because of this*)

One evening, as he was returning from a visit to Lord Brahma, Indra saw Ṛksha Viraja, a Vānara king who was in female form at the time. The sight of a female aroused erotic feelings in Indra. His

semen fell on the female Ṛksha Viraja's tail. A son Vāli was born to her as a result. *Uttara Rāmāyaṇa*

Indradyumna I – A Brahmin. Once, he saw Mōhini (*Lord Vishṇu in female form*) and asked her who she was. She replied, "I am Māya (*illusion*)". He asked her how Māya could be overcome. She told him that worshipping the Supreme Being was the only means to overcome Māya. *Kūrma Purāṇa*

Indradyumna II – A king. He used to reside in Indra* Lōka (*heaven, abode of Indra and the Dēvas*). As his fame on earth was fading in time, the Dēvas told him that he is not eligible to stay in heaven any longer and asked him to return to earth. He came to earth and found everything there unfamiliar. He went to Mārkanḍēya (*one of the immortals*) and asked him, "Do you know me?" Mārkanḍēya replied that he did not, and said, "There is someone older than me, an owl named Prāvārakarṇa, who might know you". They went together to Prāvārakarṇa and Indradyumna asked him, "Do you know me?" Prāvārakarṇa said he did not and said, "There is someone older than me, a crane named Nāḷījangha, who might know you". They all went together to Nāḷījangha and Indradyumna asked him, "Do you know me?" He said "I do not, but there is a tortoise named Ākūpāra who is older than me that might know you". They all went to Ākūpāra and Indradyumna asked him, "Do you know me?" Ākūpāra replied, "I know you. You are king Indradyumna. You saved me many times. You had performed many Yāgas. This lake was formed by the constant stomping of the cows you donated." On hearing this, messengers from heaven came and acknowledged that he was still eligible to reside in heaven because his fame was still recognised on earth,

and invited him back. Mārkanḍēya left everyone else there and went on his way. *Mahā Bhārata*

Indradyumna III – King of Avanti. He abdicated his kingdom and decided to dedicate his life to devotion to God. Determined to acquire an icon of God, he travelled to the south. As he was constantly meditating on Lord Vishṇu, He was pleased and appearing in the king's dream, Vishṇu revealed a means of acquiring the icon he desired. Accordingly, Indradyumna went to the seashore. There, he saw two Brahmin-looking individuals under an Aṣvattha (*fig*) tree. Indradyumna requested them to make icons of the Trimūrti (*Vishṇu, Ṣiva, and Brahma*) for him. Visvakarma*, who was one of the sculptors, created beautiful and auspicious icons and presented them to Indradyumna. Indradyumna worshipped the icons and realizing that those who made the icons were divine, he prayed to them and went to heaven. *Brahma Purāṇa*

Indrajit – Rāvaṇa's eldest son. He was named Mēghanātha. He performed a Yāga called "Mahēṣwara Kratu" (*to propitiate Lord Ṣiva*). He accompanied his father when he waged war against Indra*. Indra at first defeated and captured Rāvaṇa. Mēghanātha, incensed, savagely attacked Indra, using Asura* magic to become invisible. He defeated Indra and freed his father. As he captured Indra and was dragging him away, Lord Brahma entreated him and freed Indra. Mēghanātha was thereafter known as Indrajit because he had defeated Indra. He requested Brahma to give him immortality, but Brahma refused.

Rāvaṇa's younger brother Vibhīshaṇa advised him to return Sīta to Rāma and make peace with Him. Indrajit objected and said it is

preferable to go to war. He did not enter the battlefield at the beginning of the war but waited until many Asura warriors were killed. On the advice of his Guru, he performed a Hōma* due to which a golden chariot emerged from the sacred fire. He joined the battle on his golden chariot and fought vigorously, severely damaging the Vānara* army using his Asura magic. He used a weapon called Nāgāstra (*serpent weapon*) to incapacitate Rāma and Lakshmaṇa. Hanumān brought a divine herbal remedy, Sanjīvani, that enabled them to recover and resume the fighting. He found it hard to defeat Rāma amd Lakshmaṇa and decided he needed to cause confusion and distress to them. He created a Sīta look-alike, and shouting that he was going to kill Sīta, stabbed her to death. At first, Rāma grieved, believing that Sīta was killed. He soon learned that He was tricked, and attacked Indrajit. Indrajit prepared to perform a Yāga to enhance his strength. Vibhīshaṇa got wind of his plans and advised Rāma amd Lakshmaṇa that if Indrajit completed the Yāga, he will become invincible and therefore, he should be killed before he succeeded. He also revealed to Lakshmaṇa the location where Indrajit was performing the Yāga. The Vānara* army engaged Indrajit's forces in battle. Indrajit and Lakshmaṇa fought each other with divine, magical weapons. Finally, Indrajit was killed by Lakshmaṇa. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Indramāla – A garland of lotus flowers. It never withers. Anyone wearing it will not be hurt by any weapons. Indra* gave it to Uparicharavasu. *Mahā Bhārata*

Indrapramiti – Disciple of Sage Pyla. Pyla had divided the Ṛg Vēda into four parts and taught them to his disciples including Indrapramiti, who taught the Vēdic collection to Māṇḍukēya,

Bāshkala, Yājnavalkya and others. *Bhāgavata*

Indraprastha – The capital city built by the Pānḍavas when their uncle Dhṛtarāshṭra divided the empire and gave them half. When they were planning on building a city, Kṛshṇa asked Indra* for help on their behalf. Indra brought in the divine architect Viṣvakarma*, who built a city on par with Amarāvati (*Indra's city in heaven*). *Mahā Bhārata*

Indravāhana – His original name was Kakutstha. He got this name because he rode on Indra* (*who took the form of a bull. Vāhana is Sanskrit for vehicle*) to fight Asuras*. *Vishṇu Purāṇa*

Indravarma – King of the country named Māḷawa. He fought on the Kaurava side in the Mahā Bhārata war. His elephant was named Aṣvatthāma (*its name was used to confuse Drōṇa into thinking his son of the same name was dead*). Bhīma killed this elephant. *Mahā Bhārata*

Indrasāvarṇi – The fourteenth Manu* (*the current one is the seventh*). In his time Ṣuchi will be in the position of Indra*. Sākshusha and others will be Dēvas. *Vishṇu Purāṇa*

Indrasēna I – Wife of a Muni named Maudgalya. Even though her husband was stricken with leprosy and emitted a foul odor, she served him devotedly. One day, as she was eating the food left over by her husband, she found one of his fingers in it, severed due to his disease. Not disgusted even by that, she just put the finger aside and ate the food. Pleased by her total devotion, Maudgalya offered to give her any boon she wants. She told him that she has an intense desire for sexual pleasure and asked him to transform himself into five handsome and virile men by using the

power of his Tapas* and have sex with her. Maudgalya did as she wished and enjoyed sex with her with his five bodies, touring all over heaven and earth for many years. Afterwards, he left her and returned to perform Tapas. Her lust for sexual activity was still not satisfied. After some time, she died and was reborn as the daughter of the king of Kāṣi*. She remained a virgin for a long time, and in frustration, started performing Tapas directed towards Lord Ṣiva. Pleased with her Tapas, Yama, Vāyu, Indra* and the Aṣvin twins came, looked her over and expressed their desire to marry her. She continued her Tapas even more intensely for Lord Ṣiva. Lord Ṣiva appeared before her and asked her to choose a boon. She said five times in quick succession that she wanted a husband. Lord Ṣiva told her that she would have five husbands. She asked, "It is possible for a man to have multiple wives, how can I be the wife of five men?" Lord Ṣiva assured her that on His word, she will have five husbands at the same time without violating moral precepts. Lord Ṣiva gave her the gift of youth and asked her to bring to Him Indra, who was on the shore of the Ganga river. She did as instructed and brought Indra to Him. Lord Ṣiva transformed Indra into five Indras, Panchēndra. She was born as Draupadi in her next life. *Mahā Bhārata*

Indrasēna II – Daughter of Nala and Damayanti. *Mahā Bhārata*

Indrasēna III – Son of Nala and Damayanti. His son was Chandrāngada. *Mahā Bhārata*

Indrasēna IV – Son of King Ṣarva. His son was Vītihōtra. *Bhāgavata*

Indumati – Daughter of King Bhōja. At her Swayamvara*, she

chose Aja as her husband. As Aja was bringing her to his city after the Swayamvara, some of the other princes who were at the Swayamvara attacked him. Aja fought and defeated them, and reached his palace with his bride. Once, as the couple were relaxing in the garden, Sage Nārada was returning from a visit to Dēva Lōka (*abode of the Gods*). As he passed over Aja's palace garden, a garland of divine flowers fell from his Vīṇa (*musical instrument similar to a Sitar, but with seven strings; probably the most ancient*) onto Indumati's neck. As soon as the garland fell on her, Indumati lost consciousness and died. Sage Nārada came to the grief-stricken Aja, consoled him and recounted her history: "In her previous life she was a divine woman named Hariṇi. A Ṛshi named Tṛṇabindu was performing Tapas and Indra* sent her to disrupt it. She went to the Ṛshi's Āṣram and created a disturbance with her singing and dancing. The enraged Ṛshi gave her a Ṣāpa* that she would become a human female. When she begged him to tell her the means for release from the Ṣāpa, he told her that she would remain human until a garland of divine flowers falls on her and then, she would regain her divine form. When the garland from my Vīṇa fell on her, she left her human form." *Raghu Vamṣa*

Ira – Wife of Sage Kaṣyapa. Trees and vines grew from her. *Garuḍa Purāṇa*

Irāvanta – Son of Arjuna and his Nāga* wife Ulūchi (*each of the Pānḍavas had at least one wife he did not share with his brothers, in addition to Draupadi, shared by all five*). Irāvanta was killed by Alambasa in the Mahā Bhārata war. *Mahā Bhārata*

Irāvati – Daughter of Uttara (*brother-in-law of Abhimanyu*). Wife

of Parīkshit. *Bhāgavata*

Īṣāna I – One of the (*eight*) Dikpālakas*. Lord Ṣiva's incarnation. *Agni Purāṇa*

Īṣāna II – Once, while Lord Kṛshṇa was in Gōkul, a fearsome, three-eyed son named Īṣāna was born from his left eye. Īṣāna was wearing a tiger-skin at birth. *Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa*

Itara – Wife of a Sage. Her son was Aitarēya. Her husband had other wives, and was fond of the other wives and their children. Once when Itara's son sat on his father's lap, the father made him get up. Upset at the humiliation of her son, she prayed to Bhūdēvi. Bhūdēvi appeared to her and put Aitarēya on a throne. *Bhāgavata*

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Jabāla – Wife of a Brahmin. Mother of Satyakāma. Satyakāma, ready to go to a Guru to start his education, asked her to tell him his father's name. She told him she was promiscuous in her youth and could not say who his father was. She told him to say he was the son of Jabāla. *Chāndōgya Upanishad*

Jābāli I – Disciple of Pathya. He was learned in the Atharva Vēda. *Vishṇu Purāṇa*

Jābāli II – A Muni. He heard Bharata (*Rāma's younger half-brother, whose mother forced her husband to make her son the crown prince and banish Rāma to the forest*) come and plead with Rāma to come back to Ayōdhya and rule the kingdom (*their father having passed away when Rāma left*), and Rāma's refusal. Jābāli said to Rāma, "Sir, Why do you abdicate your kingdom with this craziness? How important is your father's promise compared to the kingdom? How would you benefit by adhering to his promise?" Rāma argued with him and persuaded him to agree that it is important to uphold promises and to do the righteous thing. Jābāli begged Rāma's forgiveness saying he thought it was appropriate to set duty aside when a great tragedy was about to occur. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Jaganmōhini – When the Dēvas and Asuras* churned the ocean

of milk, Amṛtam* emerged and in order to prevent the Asuras from becoming immortal by drinking it, Lord Vishṇu assumed a beautiful female form (*Jaganmōhini, literally 'charmer to the world'*), distracted the Asuras by appearing to flirt with them, and gave the Amṛtam only to the Dēvas. Lord Ṣiva, desirous of seeing Her beautiful form, begged Lord Vishṇu to assume His female form again. Jaganmōhini appeared, but ran away. Lord Ṣiva chased Her, enamored with Her beauty. While they were making love, Jaganmōhini's sweat (*from running and lovemaking*) flowed as the Ganḍaki river. A son named Kāla Bhairava (*instrumental in destroying the Yāga of Daksha Prajāpati*, father of Sati, Lord Ṣiva's first Consort*) was born to Jaganmōhini and Lord Ṣiva. (*It is popular belief especially in South India that Ayyappa, with millions of devotees today, was also a son of Lord Ṣiva and Vishnu's female form*). *Bhāgavata*

Jahna I – A Muni. Son of Hōtraka. While he was performing a Yāga, the river Ganga, which was following Bhagīratha, submerged the area where the Yāga was being performed. A furious Jahna drank all the water in the river. Bhagīratha begged Jahna to release Ganga. Jahna relented and released the water. Jahna's son was Pūru. *Brahma Purāṇa; Bhāgavata*

Jahna II – A king. His son was Ajahna. He was an ancestor of Viṣvāmitra. *Mahā Bhārata*

Jahnu I – A descendant if Vijaya, son of Purūrava. *Bhāgavata*

Jahnu II – Son of Kuru and father of Suratha. *Bhāgavata*

Jahnu III – Descendant of Sudhana. Son of Pushpavanta. *Bhāgavata*

Jaigīshavya – A Muni. He once accompanied Sage Kapila to a Yāga being performed by King Aṣvaṣira. The king asked them, "In what manner should Lord Vishṇu be worshipped to propitiate Him." They replied that they are Lord Vishṇu. The king said, "Lord Vishṇu has a bird He rides. He also holds a Ṣankha (*conch; each great warrior had a conch with a distinct sound, which they used to announce their arrival on the battlefield*) and Chakra*. You do not have any of those. You are not Lord Vishṇu." Sage Kapila instantly took the form of Lord Vishṇu and Jaigīshavya became Garutmanta*. The king then pointed out that Lord Vishṇu has a lotus protruding from His navel, with Lord Brahma sitting in it. Jaigīshavya then took the form of Brahma with Sage Kapila remaining as Lord Vishṇu. With King Aṣvaṣira still not convinced that he was looking at Lord Vishṇu, the Sages disappeared and the site where the Yāga was being performed was filled with cruel wild animals. When the king begged their forgiveness, they explained that Lord Vishṇu will be propitiated only if one understands that He is in all things and that they acted the way they did only to teach the king this truth. *Varāha Purāṇa*

Jaimini – Disciple of Sage Kṛshṇa Dwaipāyana (*another name of Sage Vyāsa*). He collaborated with fellow disciples Pyla, Vaiṣampāyana and Sumanta to codify the Vēdas into sets of rules. He was learned in the Sāma Vēda and taught it to his son Sumanta. *Bhāgavata; Mahā Bhārata*

Jājili – A Muni. While he was performing intense Tapas, some sparrows built a nest in his hair. They laid eggs in the nest. The eggs hatched and the baby birds began to fly. Jājili remained immobile in order to avoid causing harm to the birds. Jājili felt

great pride in the fact that he was able, due to his spiritual strength generated by his great Tapas*, to inconvenience himself greatly due to consideration for some birds. The sparrows (*articulate, like many other animal and avian species in the Purāṇas*), observing that the Muni continued to perform Tapas without moving at all, commented, "What power of Tapas? Such steadiness!" Ākāṣavāṇi* responded, "What is so great about him? There is a greater man than this in Vāraṇāsi (*present-day Benares*), named Tulādhara." Jājili, wanting to see this Tulādhara and to find out what he was really like, went to Vāraṇāsi. Tulādhara asked him, "You stood still to prevent any harm to baby sparrows. What is so great about that?" Jājili responded, "You are a businessman. How did you know?" Tulādhara said, "I am always content. To me, gold and clay are the same. I do not wish for anything. I neither want to change any thing that happens nor to get something I do not have." Jājili asked him about Yagjnas. Tulādhara told him Dēvas do not favour Yagjnas performed hoping for a desired result. Jājili asked, "Why do you not stop this Karma (*action, of doing business*)?" Tulādhara replied, "Happiness comes from taking proper action without desire for specific results. Ask the birds which live on your head." When Jājili asked them, the birds perched on his arm and said, "We are servants of Dharma Dēvata (*God of Righteousness*). We were sent to investigate you. Jealousy, impure thoughts, envy – these should be avoided. One without these attributes will be happy." Tulādhara taught Jājili knowledge of Brahma*. *Mahā Bhārata*

Jalandhara – A Rākshasa (*Asura**) king. After Ṣiva destroyed Manmatha by fire from His third eye, the remnants of the fire fell

in the ocean. Immediately, a very loud cry was heard which terrified all the worlds. The Dēvas all rushed to Lord Brahma. Brahma, accompanied by the Dēvas, proceeded to investigate the origin of the sound, approached Samudra (*the Ocean God*) and asked him what caused the loud cry. Samudra showed Brahma his new-born son and asked Him to name the child and to predict the child's Jātaka (*future*). Brahma named the child Jalandhara and revealed that he had no reason to fear anyone but Ṣiva. When Jalandhara reached adulthood, Samudra informed Kālanēmi (*presumably, that his son was an eligible bachelor*). Kālanēmi gave his daughter Bṛnda in marriage to Jalandhara. One day, as Jalandhara held court, Ṣukra (*Guru of the Asuras*) came visiting. Jalandhara requested the Rākshasas' Guru for information on what was happening (*Ṣukra, like Nārada, had access to the movers and shakers of all the worlds and travelled extensively*). Ṣukra related how the Dēvas churned the ocean and took Amṛtam*, precious stones including diamonds and did not give Samudra anything. He also described how when Rāhu managed to take a sip of the Amṛtam, they severed his head (*he did not die however, because of sipping Amṛtam*). Furious on learning these facts, Jalandhara sent an emissary named Ghasmara to Indra*, with a demand for the return of all the wealth taken from the ocean. Indra replied, "My younger brother, Lord Vishṇu, had destroyed untold numbers of Asuras. Who cares what you want?"

Jalandhara prepared for war. The Dēvas also mobilized for war. Lord Vishṇu accompanied the Dēvas and attacked Jalandhara. However fiercely He fought, Vishṇu could not defeat Jalandhara. Impressed by Jalandhara's courage and valour, Vishṇu offered him

a boon. Jalandhara asked that Vishṇu, together with His consort, Lakshmi (*Goddess of Wealth*), reside in his home. Vishṇu and Lakshmi accordingly took up residence in the home of Jalandhara. The Dēvas now had no one competent to fight on their behalf. They went to Nārada and related their plight. Reassuring the Dēvas that he would help them, Nārada went to Jalandhara. He said, "O, Jalandhara! How can I find the words to describe your wealth? You have a Ratna (*gem or diamond*) of a horse! You have a gem of an elephant! You have a gem of a palace! But, what is the use? None of this matters because you do not have a gem of a wife! The gem of a woman is Pārvati, who lives in the cemetery. Why should Ṣiva have Pārvati? Why don't you take her?" On hearing this, the naive Jalandhara sent word to Ṣiva demanding that He promptly send Pārvati to him. Ṣiva came and attacked Jalandhara in a fierce battle. Jalandhara, using his shape-shifting powers, took on the form of Ṣiva and had some of his band of Asuras look like Gaṇas (*Ṣiva's retinue*) and go to Pārvati. One of the Asuras who took the form of a Gaṇa announced to Pārvati that Ṣiva had come to see her. However, he then froze and became like a statue. Realizing that someone is deceiving her with magic and illusion, Pārvati went away in fear and 'thought of'* Vishṇu. He then came to her and asked, "What would you like me to do for you? Whatever you wish, I will gladly do." Pārvati said, "You need to make Bṛnda commit adultery because as long as Bṛnda remains faithful and devoted to her husband, Jalandhara will not surrender." Lord Vishṇu deceived and seduced Bṛnda. Ṣiva learned that Jalandhara tried to deceive Pārvati and fought even more fiercely than before and killed Jalandhara. *Ṣiva Purāṇa*

Jalapadi – Another name for Jānapadi. *Mahā Bhārata*

Jalasandha I – Ruler of Magadha kingdom. He fought on the side of Duryōdhana in the Mahā Bhārata war. When Sātyaki (*Kṛshṇa's constant companion*) pulled Kṛtavarma from his chariot, he attacked Sātyaki. A battle ensued between them in which Sātyaki killed him. *Mahā Bhārata*

Jamadagni – Son of Ṛchīka. His mother was Satyavati. He and his maternal uncle Viṣvāmitra were born as a result of a boon from Ṛchīka. He married Rēṇuka. They had sons named Ramaṇvata, Suṣēshaṇa, Vasu, Viṣvāvasu, and Paraṣurāma.

Once, Rēṇuka went to the river to bring water. While she was there, she saw King Chitraratha bathing, and stood for a while, watching him with admiration and a little love for his good looks. As a result, she was late returning home. Learning of the reason for her delay, Jamadagni said to his sons, "Your mother committed adultery with King Chitraratha. You must go and kill her." The four older sons told him they will not commit matricide. Jamadagni gave them a Ṣāpa*. Then he asked Paraṣurāma to kill his mother. Paraṣurāma, without any hesitation, killed his mother, came back and reported to his father that the deed was done. Pleased by his youngest son's courage and devotion to him, Jamadagni asked him to request a boon. Paraṣurāma asked him to revive his mother and withdraw the Ṣāpa he had given to his four brothers. Jamadagni acceded to his request and revived Rēṇuka.

Once, a king named Kārtavīryārjuna (*of the Haihaya dynasty*), tired after hunting in the forest, stopped at Jamadagni's Āṣram to rest and to visit the Ṛshi. Jamadagni greeted the king and offered his hospitality to the king and his retinue. The king, feeling that it

would be beyond the Ṛshi's capability to provide refreshments to his entire retinue, politely refused and said he would return to the city. Jamadagni, saying it was his good fortune to have the opportunity to provide hospitality to the ruler of the land and his retinue, had an entire city complete with buildings and gardens built by the power of his Kāmadhēnu (*literally, the cow that grants any wish*). He not only provided the king comfortable facilities where he could rest, he also arranged for his troops a sumptuous feast of delicious food. The king, impressed by the power of the Kāmadhēnu, later sent his minister to Jamadagni with an offer of as much wealth as the Ṛshi desires in exchange for the cow. The Ṛshi refused to part with the cow. With no respect for the Ṛshi, the king ordered his men to forcibly capture the cow. Jamadagni tried to stop them, saying, "How dare you steal the cow belonging to someone who provided you a magnificent feast right after you partook of it?" The king's men beat and killed Jamadagni. Paraṣurāma went to Māhishmatīpura (*the capital city*) and killed the king and the soldiers who were at the Āṣram. When Paraṣurāma returned, he found his mother weeping over his father's corpse and his brothers ready to cremate the body. Just then, Sage Bhṛgu (*Jamadagni's grandfather*) arrived and revived Jamadagni. He told Paraṣurāma that he had sinned by killing the ruler of the land and asked him to undertake a pilgrimage to holy places. Paraṣurāma continued to attend to his father's needs and vowed that because a Kshatriya had killed his father for no reason, he would attack Kshatriyas twenty one times and destroy them. Jamadagni tried to pacify his son. However, Paraṣurāma continued his rampage against kings.

Once, Jamadagni carrying a bow and Rēṇuka carrying the quiver of arrows, went to the woods to practice recreational archery. Jamadagni would shoot the arrows and Rēṇuka would find them and bring them back. One time, Rēṇuka was late returning with an arrow. Jamadagni asked her why it took her so long to return. She replied, "Sūrya (*the Sun God*) had made the ground very hot which hurt my feet and the heat hurt my head as well. So, I stood under a tree for a while." Jamadagni, angry with Sūrya for hurting his wife, threatened to shoot arrows at Sūrya. Sūrya approached him disguised as a Brahmin, and tried to persuade him to refrain from attacking Sūrya. Jamadagni could not be shaken from his resolve to attack Sūrya. Sūrya then revealed himself and presented a pair of sandals and an umbrella to Jamadagni for protection against his heat. He also proclaimed that the donation of sandals and umbrellas to Brahmins confers Puṇya*.

Once, in preparation of a Pitṛ Yagjna (*religious rite to honour his ancestors*), Jamadagni milked his cow and kept the milk in a pot. Intending to test him, the God of Anger threw the milk in the dirt. Jamadagni remained calm and silent. The God of Anger said, "I had heard that you were quick to anger. Your restraint in the face of my actions is praiseworthy. I apologise." Jamadagni said to him, "What did you do wrong? There is no need to apologise." Jamadagni's ancestors were angered by his failure to take umbrage at the God of Anger. They gave him a Ṣāpa that he would be born as a mongoose. He prayed to Lord Vishṇu and was told that he would be released from his ancestors' Ṣāpa when he criticizes the Yāga that Dharmarāja would perform. (See **Saktuprastha**) *Mahā Bhārata*

One of Kārtavīrya's descendants, named Ṣūra, killed Jamadagni to avenge the Kshatriyas' deaths at the hands of Paraṣurāma. *Brahma Purāṇa*

Jāmbavanta – He was born when Brahma yawned, and became the ruler of (*articulate*) bears. He was both learned and strong. He was born long before Garutmanta*. He observed the Dēvas obtain Amritam* and the war between the Dēvas and Asuras*. He had travelled around the world many times. He sipped a little Amṛtam by requesting the Dēvas for it. The Amṛtam not only made him strong and healthy but helped him live a very long time. In his youth, he used to circle the earth from the eastern to the western mountains and also visit Kailāsa (*the mountain abode of Lord Ṣiva*). Once, he was visiting the Sages performing Yāgas on Kailāsa and conversing with them. Bali's son then lifted a mountain with both arms and hurled it at Jāmbavanta. Jāmbavanta blocked it with his knee. The mountain broke into two pieces but his knee was also injured. He lost some of his strength then. He was present when the Vānaras* were discussing how to cross the ocean to look for Sīta and who could best do it. He told them that he could fly only up to ninety miles due to the injury to his knee but it would not be enough to reach Lanka*. Angada, who was tasked by Sugrīva with reaching Lanka to verify that Sīta was safe, afraid of incurring Sugrīva's wrath if he failed, announced that he would commit suicide. Jāmbavanta said to him, "You are the son of Vāli and destined to become king. You should not die. Hanumān has the ability to cross the ocean and return." He also narrated the story behind the birth of Hanumān.

Jāmbavanta lived through the Kṛta and Trēta yugas (*epochs,*

each more than a million years long) into the Dwāpara Yuga. He had a daughter named Jāmbavati. He and his daughter lived in a cave instead of in the forest. He saw the lion which had killed Prasēna (*brother of Satrājit whose daughter was Satyabhāma, Lord Kṛshṇa's favourite wife*) and took the Ṣyamantaka diamond. He killed the lion, took the diamond from it and put it on the swing in which his daughter slept. Lord Kṛshṇa came there in search of the diamond (*to disprove the false allegation that He had taken it from Prasēna*). At first he did not know who Kṛshṇa was (*specifically, that He was Rāma in a new incarnation*) and engaged in hand-to-hand combat for several days. When he realized who he was fighting, he gave Kṛshṇa not only the diamond but his daughter in marriage as well. *Rāmāyaṇa; Bhāgavata*

Jāmbavati – Daughter of Jāmbavanta. Kṛshṇa, searching for the Ṣyamantaka diamond, found it tied to her swing and retrieved it. Jāmbavanta fought him for several days until he realized that he was battling Ṣrī Kṛshṇa at which point he gave Kṛshṇa not only the diamond but his daughter in marriage as well. She had a son named Sāmba. *Bhāgavata*

Jambhāsura – Brother of Kujambha. He used to harass Indra*. Indra begged Lord Vishṇu for help. Lord Vishṇu advised him to not use the Vajrāyudha (*a thunderbolt, Indra's signature weapon, literally 'weapon of diamond'*), but obtain new weapons by begging Agni (*the God of Fire*), and use them to fight Jambhāsura. Indra borrowed a chariot from a Gandharva* named Viṣvāvasu, and with the son of Ṣamīra as his chariot driver, fought Jambhāsura and killed him. Jambhāsura's daughter was Datta.

Father of Tāṭaka's husband, Sunanda. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Jambhu I – An Asura*. He used to destroy Yāgas. Lord Vishṇu, emerging from the fire of a Yāga (*at the successful conclusion of a Yāga, a divine being, called a Yagjna Purusha, emerges from the fire and delivers the desired result or fruit of the Yāga to the performer*), killed him. *Mahā Bhārata*

Jambhu II – An Asura*. Indra* killed him in the war between the Dēvas and Asuras. *Bhāgavata*

Jambū Dwīpa – An island south of the Mēru mountain (*the tallest mountain in the world, according to Hindu mythology, which was aware of the Himalaya range*). It got the name from the Jambu (*rose apple*) tree on it. It was also called Sudarṣana Dwīpa due to the Jambu tree also being known as a Sudarṣana tree.

Jambū Dwīpa comprised of seven parts called Varshas – named Kuru, Hiraṇmaya, Ramaṇaka, Ilāvṛta, Bhadrāṣva, Kētumāla, Harivarsha, Bharatavarsha, and Kimpurusha. *Mahā Bhārata*

Jambū river – The fruits of the Jambu (*rose apple*) tree, south of the Mēru mountain, fell to the ground and their juice flowed as a river and is called the Jambū river. Any thing touched by the water of the river turned to gold and anyone drinking the water would be free of hunger, thirst and aging. *Mahā Bhārata*

Jambukumāra I – An Asura*. Son of Vidyujjihva and his wife Ṣūrpaṇakha. The Dēvas killed his father. Jambukumāra, determined to avenge his father's death, performed Tapas* directed towards Indra*. Indra appeared to him and gave him a weapon named Chandrahāsa. Dissatisfied with the Chandrahāsa as the reward for his Tapas, he angrily rejected it and continued his

Tapas in the Panchavaṭi forest. Tall bamboo plants grew all around him, hiding him from the surroundings. The weapon Chandrahāsa remained suspended from the sky nearby. Lakshmaṇa (*younger brother of Lord Rāma*) who was in that forest at the time, was gathering fruits from the trees. He saw the Chandrahāsa, picked it up and shook it. Some Munis who were in the vicinity asked him why he was cutting down fruit trees and asked him to cut down the tall bamboo plants instead. As Lakshmaṇa did so, Jambukumāra, who was in the middle of the bamboo plants, was killed by the weapon. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Jambukumāra II– His name was Japāsura. In his previous life, he was Sōmakāsura, who stole the Vēdas. *Vichitra Rāmāyaṇa*

Jambumāli – Son of Prahasta. A soldier in the army of Rāvaṇa. When Hanumān was in Lanka*, destroying the gardens (*with his burning tail the Asuras* set on fire*), this Asura tried to capture him. Hanumān attacked and killed him. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Janaka I – He was born when King Nimi's right arm was churned. Nimi left his body due to a Ṣāpa* by Sage Vasishṭha. Concerned that the earth had no ruler, Munis in the Sabha (*court*) of King Nimi churned Nimi's right arm, and a son emerged. They named him Janaka. He had the name Vaidēha because he was born from a Vidēha (*someone without a Dēha or body*). Another name for him was Mithila (*someone born from a Mathana or churning*). The city he built was also called Mithila. His son was Udāvasu. *Bhāgavata*

Janaka II – King of Mithila, named Sīradhwaja. Son of Hrasvarōma. He had a brother named Kuṣadhwaja. Janaka's wife

was Ratnamāla. Once, in preparation for a Yāga to propitiate the Gods hoping for the birth of children, he was getting the soil tilled, when the tip of the plow revealed a box made of gold with a baby girl inside. Janaka raised her with love and affection. She was given the name Sīta (*in Sanskrit, a furrow or track or line of a ploughshare*) because she was found in a furrow. Sīta was extremely beautiful. Sudhanva, ruler of a kingdom named Sānkāṣya threatened to wage war to win Sīta if Janaka did not agree to give her to him in marriage. Janaka battled him and killed him and gave Sudhanva's kingdom to his own brother Kuṣadhwaja.

Once Sīta reached marriageable age, Janaka announced that he will give her in marriage to whoever strings the bow of Lord Ṣiva that has been in his family's possession for a long time. Many princes came and attempted the challenge. They all failed even to lift the bow, let alone string it. Finally, Rāma (*son of Daṣaratha*), whom Sage Viṣvāmitra brought along, broke the bow while easily stringing it. Janaka, extremely happy, sent word to Daṣaratha and when he arrived, the marriage of Sīta and Rāma was performed. Janaka also gave his brothers' daughters to Rāma's brothers in marriage. Janaka was a scholar of great knowledge and wisdom. He even had access to heaven while remaining a Gṛhasta (*family man*) on earth. Many Brahmins used to come to him to discuss aspects of Dharma (*righteousness*) with him. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Janamējaya I – Son of Kausalya (*different from Lord Rāma's mother*) and Pūru. He achieved fame by performing three Aṣvamēdha Yāgas*. His wife was Ananta and their son was Prāchīka. *Maha Bharata*

Janamējaya II – Son of Sumati. *Bhāgavata*

Janamējaya III – Son of Parīkshit and husband of Vapushṭa. He had sons named Chandrāpīḍa, Sūryāpīḍa, Ṣatānīka, Ṣanka, and Karṇa. Sage Vaiṣampāyana (*disciple of Sage Vyāsa*) narrated the story of the Mahā Bhārata to him. He had younger brothers named Ṣrutasēna, Bhīmasēna, and Ugrasēna. Once, when a (*articulate*) dog came near where he was performing a Yāga named Sattra, his brothers beat the dog. The dog's mother came and in a sad voice said, "Sir, your brothers thoughtlessly beat my weak, defenceless son. Is it not true that bad things happen to those who hurt the poor?", and disappeared. Janamējaya brought Sōmaṣravasa as the priest and performed religious rites of absolution for his brother's act of cruelty.

He knew that an articulate serpent named Takshaka caused his father's demise. He was angry at serpents as a result. Also, Sages Ruru and Udanka, who had been harmed by serpents, persuaded him to undertake a serpent sacrifice and he agreed. Many serpents were thrown onto flames. The world of articulate serpents was trembling with fear and trepidation. Some serpents prayed to Jaratkāru (*younger sister of Vāsuki to whom the Gods owed a great favour due to his having been used as the rope to churn the ocean of milk*). She sent her son Āstīka to plead with Janamējaya to stop the serpent sacrifice. Āstīka approached Janamējaya, and impressed him with a display of knowledge and skill. He convinced Janamējaya that it is not right to harm serpents. Janamējaya then aborted the serpent sacrifice. *Mahā Bhārata*

Jānapadi – A beautiful woman. She was sent to disrupt the Tapas* of a Muni named Ṣaradvanta (*by Indra*, of course*). He

ejaculated spontaneously as soon as he saw her. *Mahā Bhārata*

Janārdana – Son of a Brahmin named Mitrasahu. He was born around the same time as were Hamsa and Ḍibhaka. He used to spend time with them but unlike them, he was a devotee of Lord Vishṇu. Hamsa and Ḍibhaka were advising their father (*the king of Sālva*) to perform a Rājasūya Yāga*. He countered that they would not be able to pull it off and should not even attempt it. Ignoring his advice, Hamsa instructed Janārdana to go to Kṛshṇa and bring salt for the Rājasūya as tribute. Janārdana went and conveyed Hamsa's message to Kṛshṇa but returned with the information that Kṛshṇa and others were coming prepared for war. He even praised Kṛshṇa. Angered by his praise of Kṛshṇa, Hamsa and Ḍibhaka expelled him from the city. *Uttara Hari Vamṣa*

Jānaṣruti – Son of a king named Janaṣruti. He made many charitable donations. He worshipped Brahmins. He desired to learn the nature of Paramēṣwara (*the Supreme Being*). He was interested only in performing good deeds. One summer, while he was sleeping on the terrace of his residence, some Ṛshis who benefited from his hospitality, intending to do him a favour, approached him taking the form of swans. The swan at the end of the group said to the lead swan, "O! Bhillāksha! Take care! The Tējas* of this king extends all the way up to Swarga (*heaven*). You might be burned up if you enter its path." The lead swan replied, "Amazing! What power can someone have, having only lived a righteous life and made charitable donations? You are praising him the way you would praise Raikva!" Having overheard this conversation, the king summoned a servant the next day and asked him, "Do you know Raikva, who performs Tapas* under the wheel of a cart?"

When the servant replied that he did not know such a person, the king told him of some means of recognizing Raikva. The servant found Raikva and asked him, "Are you Raikva?" The Ṛshi replied that he was.

During the conversation with Raikva, the servant learned that the Ṛshi planned to start a family and needed money and he informed the king accordingly. The king brought to Raikva six hundred cows, valuable ornaments and chariots. Seeing these, Raikva said to the king, "O! Ṣūdra*! Take back the wealth you have brought." (*Addressing a king, who is a Kshatriya, the second highest caste, as a Ṣūdra, the lowest caste, is more insulting than rejecting the gifts*) The king returned with a thousand cows, his daughter and much money. Presenting them all to Raikva, he asked the Ṛshi to teach him whatever knowledge he knew. Raikva accepted the king's daughter and the money. Raikva revealed to Jānaṣruti the divine knowledge Brahma* Gjnāna that someone who gave those gifts is qualified to be taught. *Mahā Bhārata*

Jantu – Son of a king named Sōmaka. Sōmaka had one hundred wives but only one son, Jantu. One day, Jantu was crying because an ant had bitten him. His father and all his wives were worried that they could not depend on such a weakling for support in their old age. A Vēdic priest suggested that if Sōmaka performed a Yaga using Jantu *('Jantu' means animal*) as the sacrificial animal, he could have many sons. Sōmaka did as advised. *Mahā Bhārata*

Jantudhana – Daughter of a Vānara* named Aja. Once, while she was walking in the forest with her father, an Asura* roared in a fearsome manner. All the animals fled in fear but she and a female cousin did not fear the Asura and went to see him. Both girls were

given in marriage to the Asura by their fathers. When she refused to accompany her husband to his home, her father gave her much wealth and sent her with her husband. *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*

Jara – A female Asura*. Once, loitering near the palace of Bṛhadratha (*king of Magadha*), she picked up two half-formed fetuses thrown as garbage by the king's wives, intending to eat the carcasses. As she held the two half-formed bodies in her hands, they combined into a live infant and started crying. She found it hard to carry the baby. Some women came out of the palace on hearing the (*unexpected*) cries and took the baby. Jara, taking a human female form, entered the palace and related her background as well as how the baby came to be to King Bṛhadratha. The king gave her a sumptuous dinner and named the baby Jarāsandha (*Sanskrit for 'put together by Jara'*) because Jara was instrumental to his being. An annual festival was held thereafter in honour of Jara. *Mahā Bhārata*

Jarandhara – Wife of Bhīma (*each of the Pāṇḍavas had at least one wife he did not share with his brothers, in addition to Draupadi, shared by all five*). Their son was Sarvaga. *Mahā Bhārata*

Jarāsandha – King of Magadha. Son of Bṛhadratha. Childless for a very long time, Bṛhadratha was performing many Vratas*. He approached a Muni named Chaṇḍakauṣika who was performing Tapas* sitting under a mango tree in the forest. He saluted the Muni with a Namaskāra* and requested him to bless him to become a father. The Muni consecrated a fruit that fell from the tree by Mantras and gave it to Bṛhadratha. Bṛhadratha split the fruit

into two and gave a piece to each of his wives. They both ate the piece of mango fruit given to them and became pregnant. They each had a baby but both babies were incomplete – each had one eye, one leg, one arm, half a stomach, and half a head as if a baby had been cut into two. Scared at the sight of the strange-looking babies and unwilling to show them to their husband, they had the babies thrown away on the street outside their palace. Jara, a Rākshasi (*female Asura**) who was loitering near the palace, pleased to find food, picked them up and held them together in her arms. When the two half-babies were brought together in Jara's arms, they combined to become a healthy baby boy and started to cry. The weight of this strong baby boy was too heavy for Jara to carry. Hearing the baby's cries, some old women came out of the palace and informed the king of their finding. Deciding that the baby is no longer available for her to eat, Jara assumed a human female form and accompanied the women and the baby to the king's presence. She explained to the king that she was a Rākshasi, that she picked up the malformed fetuses to eat, and that a normal baby boy was formed out of the two half-babies when she brought them together. The boy was named Jarāsandha because he was formed when Jara caused Sandhi (*union*) of two pieces of flesh.

His father crowned Jarāsandha as his successor and left for the forest for Tapas. His capital was Girivrajapura (*literally, a city formed by a group of hills*). The city, as its name implies, was surrounded by hills named Gōratha, Ṛshabha, Vaihāra, etc., which formed an impenetrable barrier that made it impossible for enemies to breach. In addition, on the peak of a mountain nearby named Chaitraka, there were kettle-drums which automatically

sounded if any outsider entered the city (*early warning system*). With all these security provisions, Jarāsandha remained immune from any enemies and was feared by other kings. He also had a boon that he could not be killed by any weapon. Hamsa and Ḍibhaka were his friends and served him, along with their armies. He captured other kings and kept them as captives in his city. He would worship Bhairava and each time he performed a Pūja, he would sacrifice one of the captive kings. His allies included Purujita, Karūṣa, and Yavana. Kamsa, Lord Kṛshṇa's evil uncle, was his son-in-law. He gave his daughters Asti and Prāsti to Kamsa in marriage. Ever since Kṛshṇa killed Kamsa, he swore enmity to Kṛshṇa and attacked Mathura many times. Kṛshṇa used to hide in fear of him.

He defeated Kṛshṇa on his eighteenth attempt after suffering seventeen defeats. The kings that were captives of Jarāsandha managed to send an appeal to Kṛshṇa to somehow save them. At the same time, Sage Nārada approached Kṛshṇa and said, "Dharmarāja is preparing to perform a Rājasūya Yaga*; who could help him better than you?" It seemed like the perfect opportunity. Jarāsandha was devoted to Brahmins. He gave any Brahmin whatever they asked for. Uddhava (*a friend of Kṛshṇa*) advised that someone should go to Jarāsandha disguised as a Brahmin and ask for Sangrāma Bhiksha (*war as alms*). In accordance with this plan, Bhīma was sent east with the horse. However, he returned disappointed because Jarāsandha did not try to capture the sacrificial horse. The troops which accompanied Bhīma also returned without an opportunity to fight Jarāsandha. Lord Kṛshṇa then set out accompanied by Bhīma and Arjuna, disguised as

Brahmins, to Jarāsandha's Sabha (*court*) to implement Uddhava's plan.

As Dharmarāja initiated the Rājasūya, Kṛshṇa, Bhīma, and Arjuna reached Girivrajapura but instead of approaching the city through its main entrance, they proceeded to enter the castle at night through another entrance, one that was designated specifically for Brahmins,. Seeing three Brahmins entering his city, Jarāsandha met them on their way, greeted them with respect and offered them new garments.They refused to accept his offering. Jarāsandha asked, "Who are you? Why are you declining my hospitable offerings?" They replied, "We are not Brahmins. We are Kshatriyas. We are not here as friends. We have a different purpose." Jarāsandha countered, "Sirs, do we not know each other? I am devoted to the Dēvas and Brahmins. I have never committed injustice toward anyone. How can there be enmity between us?" Kṛshṇa answered, "You have captured kings and have been sacrificing them. That is unjust. We came to kill you. I am Kṛshṇa." Jarāsandha then said, "How can it be unjust for a Kshatriya to kill his enemies? Anyway, since you want to fight me, let us do it. What are your weapons of choice? The three of you can fight me together." They asked him to choose one of them for a hand-to-hand fight. Jarāsandha first enthroned his son, returned and chose Bhīma for the hand-to-hand battle. After a fierce fight that lasted fourteen days, he was killed by Bhīma. (*Some sources cite a further detail to the story – Bhīma kept tearing Jarāsandha's body into two halves several times and the two halves keep combining again into a live Jarāsandha. After much frustration, Bhīma noticed a signal from Kṛshṇa that he should*

throw the two pieces in such a way that the cut edges did not face each other. Once Bhīma did as suggested by Kṛshṇa, Jarāsandha could no longer duplicate the way in which he was formed in Jara's arms, and finally died) *Bhāgavata*

In his previous life, he was an Asura* named Viprachitti. *Mahā Bhārata, Bhāgavata*

Jaratkāru – A Brahmin. He forswore marriage and observing strict celibacy, was constantly performing Tapas*. One day, observing some Brahmins hanging upside down from a tree he asked them, "Sirs, who are you? Teach me the Tapas you are performing." They told him with sadness, "We are the ancestors of Jaratkāru. Since he remains childless, we cannot proceed with our good afterlife and are about to be condemned to a bad afterlife." Sympathizing with the plight of his ancestors, he decided to raise a family but wanted a girl with the same name as his and started searching for such a girl. The Nāga* King Vāsuki, with prescient knowledge that this man's son will be able to dissuade Janamējaya (*Arjuna's great- grandson*) from performing the serpent sacrifice Yāga, gave his sister Jaratkāru in marriage to him. One day, annoyed with his wife for waking him up, he left her and went away to the forest to perform Tapas. Āstīka was their son. *Skānda Purāṇa*

Jaratkāru – Sister of Vāsuki, who gave her in marriage to Jaratkāru. One day, concerned that her husband was oversleeping and would miss his Sandhyāvandana (*morning religious rites*), she woke him up. Annoyed that she disturbed his sleep and insulted him, he left her and went away to the forest to perform Tapas*. She sent their son Āstīka to Janamējaya to dissuade him from

performing the serpent sacrifice. *Mahā Bhārata*

Jarita – A (*articulate*) female bird. A Muni named Mandapāla, wanting to sire children, took the form of a bird and made love to her. Four sons were born to them, one of them was named Drōṇa. (See **Jaritāri**) *Mahā Bhārata*

Jaritāri – Son of Jarita by Mandapāla while he was in the form of a bird. He had brothers named Sārisṛka, Āpastambamitra, and Drōṇa. These four brothers were well-versed in the nature of Brahma*. Soon after they were born, Mandapāla placed Jarita and the four sons (*all of them birds, all articulate*) in the Khāṇḍava forest (see **Agni**) and went away. When Jarita realized the forest was burning, she was sad because the sons could not fly yet and she would not be able to take them to a safe place. She told them to escape the fire by hiding in a hole in the ground. They said to her, "If we enter a hole in the ground, a rat will certainly swallow us. We would rather stay here and take a chance on the wind driving the fire away from us. Sever your attachment to us. Go to a safe place and if you continue to live, you can have more sons." As the fire was consuming the forest, the four brothers each chanted Mantras from one of the four Vēdas and prayed for their safety. The tree they were on remained untouched by the fire. Their mother came back and was happy to see they were safe. Mandapāla also visited his children. *Maha Bharata*

Jaṭa – An Asura*. While the Pāṇḍavas were staying on the Gandhamādana mountain, he would disguise himself as a Brahmin, visit them and enjoy their hospitality (*Pāṇḍavas, like all members of the Kshatriya or warrior and princely caste, always*

treated Brahmins with respect and provided for them). When Bhīma (*physically the strongest of the Pāṇḍavas*) was away searching for the Saugandhika flower, Jaṭāsura saw an opportunity and abducted Dharmarāja and Draupadi. He was flying away, carrying them and threatening them. In the meantime, Bhīma returned, killed Jaṭāsura and returned his brother and Draupadi home. Jaṭāsura's son was Ṣambara. *Mahā Bhārata*

Jātahāriṇi – A (*articulate*) cat. Seven days after the birth of Chākshushu, she carried him away and placed him in the bed of the wife of Vikrānta, took her baby and placed it in another new mother's bed and took away and ate the third baby. The cat made her living in this manner. *Mārkanḍēya Purāṇa*

Jātukarṇi – Vātya, Maudgalya, Ṣālīya, Gōmukha, and Ṣiṣira, all disciples of Ṣākalya, taught him the parts of the Ṛg Vēda Samhita* that each of them had learned. He, in turn, taught Balāka, Painga, Vaitāḷa, and Viraja. *Bhāgavata*

Jaṭāyu – A (*articulate*) bird. Son of Ṣyēni and and her husband Anūra. Sampāti was his brother. The two young brothers, while competing to see which of them could fly higher, rose close to the Sun. With his wings singed by the Sun's heat, Sampāti fell to the ground. Jaṭāyu fell in a different spot and the two never saw each other again. Jaṭāyu had two sons, Karṇikāra and Ṣatagāmi. Jaṭāyu was a close and dear friend of Daṣaratha (*Lord Rāma's father*). When Daṣaratha fell in the sea and was about to drown on his journey to Kausalya's place to marry her, it was Jaṭāyu who rescued him and took him back to Ayōdhya. He saw Rāvaṇa carrying away Sīta. Hearing her loud pleas for someone to rescue

her after identifying herself as the daughter-in-law of Daṣaratha and wife of Rāma, he flew up to Rāvaṇa and asked him to release Sīta. When Rāvaṇa refused his request, Jaṭāyu fought him. Rāvaṇa cut off Jaṭāyu's wings. Falling to the ground, he waited for Rāma and narrated to Him what happened to Sīta and to himself and died. Rāma Himself performed Jaṭāyu's cremation rites. *Rāmāyaṇa, Matsya Purāṇa*

Jaṭila – A Ṛshi. His daughter, using the spiritual power gained by Tapas*, became the only wife of seven Ṛshis. *Mahā Bhārata*

Jaya I – Lord Vishṇu's gate-keeper, along with his brother Vijaya. Once, several Sages including Sanaka and Sanandana arrived for an audience with Lord Vishṇu. Jaya and Vijaya blocked them at the entrance, telling them that they have to wait because it is not a good time to see Lord Vishṇu. The Sages, saying, "How dare you stop us from seeing Lord Vishṇu?", gave the gate-keepers a Ṣāpa* that they will be born as Asuras*. Lord Vishṇu, aware of the Sages' Ṣāpa, gave them the audience they requested and summoning Jaya and Vijaya, He told them, "Do not be afraid. The Sages' Ṣāpa is irreversible, but you will become part of Me at the end of three lives as Asuras." Jaya and Vijaya were incarnated as Hiraṇyāksha and Hiraṇyakaṣipu; Rāvaṇa and Kumbhakarṇa; and Ṣiṣupāla and Dantavaktra. After these incarnations, they merged with Lord Vishṇu. *Bhāgavata*

Jaya II – Father of Virādha and husband of Ṣatahrada. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Jaya III – Wife of a Vidyādhara (*semi-divine beings with special magical powers including shape-shifting and invisibility*) named Pushpadanta. Once, Pushpadanta overheard a story Lord Ṣiva told

His Consort Pārvati in secrecy and told it to his wife. Jaya then told the story to Pārvati Herself. This caused Pārvati to give a Ṣāpa* to Pushpadanta. *Kathāsaritsāgara; Devānga Purāṇa*

Jaya IV – One of Viṣvāmitra's sons. *Bhāgavata*

Jaya V – Wife of a king named Arshṭishēṇa. Their son was Bhara. Once, while her husband was performing a Yāga on the banks of the Ganga river, an Asura* named Midhu abducted her, her husband and the priest and carried them all away to Rasātala (*a netherworld*). The son of the priest, named Devāpi, rescued them and brought them all back. *Brahma Purāṇa*

Jaya VI – The secret name used by Dharmarāja while he and the rest of the Pānḍavas were spending a year incognito in Virāṭa Nagara (*the city of King Virāṭa*). *Mahā Bhārata*

Jayadbala - The secret name used by Sahadēva while he and the rest of the Pānḍavas were spending a year incognito in Virāṭa Nagara (*the city of King Virāṭa*). *Mahā Bhārata*

Jayadhwaja – Son of Kārtavīryārjuna. He went into hiding due to fear of Paraṣurāma. His son was Tālajangha. *Brahmānḍa Purāṇa*

Jayādidēvas – Lord Brahma created them from His face and directed them to get married and have children (*delegating His primary function as Creator to increase the populations of various species*). Arguing that raising families is not a path to Mukti*, they remained unmarried. Angered by their disobedience, He gave them a Ṣāpa* that they each suffer seven lives (*the exact opposite of their reason for avoiding marriage*). They prayed to Him. He relented and granted that they can attain Mukti after seven

years (*instead of seven lifetimes*). *Brahma Purāṇa*

Jayadratha – Son of Vṛddhakshatra, ruler of a country named Sindhu. He was also known as Saindhava. He married Dhṛtarāshṭra's daughter Dussala. *Maha Bharata*

Jayanta I – Son of Indra* ang his wife Ṣachī Dēvi. *Mahā Bhārata*

Jayanta II – He was among the older fifty of Viṣvāmitra's one hundred sons. By refusing to accept Ṣunaṣṣēpha as his older brother (*along with the rest of the first fifty. The younger fifty accepted him*), he incurred a Ṣāpa* by Viṣvāmitra. *Bhāgavata*

Jayanta III – The secret name used by Bhīma while he and the rest of the Pānḍavas were spending a year incognito in Virāṭa Nagara (*the city of King Virāṭa*). *Mahā Bhārata*

Jayanti I – Daughter of Indra*. Once, when Ṣukra (*Guru of the Asuras**) was performing intense Tapas*, Indra sent her to disrupt it. Ṣukra, however, noticed her only after completing his Tapas and obtaining the desired boons from Brahma. He then enjoyed sexual pleasures with her. She gave birth to Dēvayāni. *Matsya Purāṇa*

Jayanti II – Wife of Ṛshabha. She had sons including Bharata, Kuṣāvarta, Ilāvarta, Āryāvarta, and Brahmavarta. *Bhāgavata*

Jayanti III – Wife of Nakta's son Gaya. Their sons were Chitraratha, Swāti, and Avarōdha. *Bhāgavata*

Jayatsēna I – Husband of Rājādhi Dēvi. Their sons were Vinda and Anuvinda. *Bhāgavata*

Jayatsēna II – Son of Sārvabhauma. His wife was Suṣravasa.

Their son was Avāchīna. *Bhāgavata*

Jayatsēna III – The secret name used by Nakula while he and the rest of the Pānḍavas were spending a year incognito in Virāṭa Nagara (*the city of King Virāṭa*). *Mahā Bhārata*

Jībala – Father of Pravāhaṇa. *Chandōgya Upanishad*

Jīmūtavāhana – A youth of the Vidyādhara (*semi-divine beings with special magical powers including shape-shifting and invisibility*) species. Son of Jīmūtakētu. His parents retired to Tapōvana* after crowning him king. Considering that looking after his parents was more important than enjoying the luxurious lifestyle of a king, Jīmūtavāhana would make frequent trips to the forest to do chores for his parents. On one such trip, he happened to see a beautiful woman named Malayavati. He also overheard her and her female companion saying that the emperor of Vidyādharas will become Malayavati's husband. He and Malayavati saw each other and instantly fell in love. Their parents performed their wedding. A few days later, Jīmūtavāhana and his brother-in-law were taking a walk and saw huge piles of serpent bones tall as mountains. Jīmūtavāhana enquired how so many bones came to be piled up like that and was informed that the bones were those of serpents devoured by Garutmanta*. He was informed that when Garutmanta was killing and eating unlimited numbers of serpents, Vāsuki, an elder statesman of the (*articulate*) serpents, negotiated an agreement with Garutmanta that one serpent will be provided to him as his meal each day and Garutmanta will stop the indiscriminate killing of serpents. A young serpent named Ṣankhachūḍa arrived to be Garutmanta's meal for that day. Behind

him came his mother, crying. A servant of Vāsuki brought red clothing for Ṣankhachūḍa to wear while he takes his position on the rock where he would be killed. Jīmūtavāhana's heart melted with pity on seeing all this. He decided to save Ṣankhachūḍa's life by taking his place as Garutmanta's meal that day and demanded the red costume the prey was supposed to wear. Ṣankhachūḍa was refusing to give him the red costume, insisting he would be Garutmanta's meal. Just then, in accordance with local custom, his mother-in-law sent a set of red clothing for the bridegroom. Jīmūtavāhana wore the new red clothes and stood on the Vadhyaṣila (*killing rock*). Garutmanta arrived and started to eat what appeared to be his meal for the day (*identified by red clothing*). Concerned that Jīmūtavāhana had been away too long, his parents and other relatives started searching for him. They noticed his head ornaments and a piece of flesh attached to them and nearby, they saw Jīmūtavāhana on the killing rock. Ṣankhachūḍa was there as well, begging Garutmanta to leave Jīmūtavāhana alone and eat him instead. Jīmūtavāhana was telling Garutmanta to eat him and satisfy his appetite. Garutmanta realized his error (*eating a humanoid instead of a serpent*) and was amazed at Jīmūtavāhana's self-sacrifice. The new bride Malayavati was weeping nearby. Jīmūtavāhana's aged parents were sobbing and begging Garutmanta to save their son's life, by bringing Amṛtam* if necessary. Remembering Amṛtam, Garutmanta went to Indra's* world and requested Indra for some Amṛtam. Obtaining some, he created a shower of it where Jīmūtavāhana was. The Amṛtam caused Jīmūtavāhana as well as all the previously killed serpents to return to life. Goddess Pārvati arrived and blessed

Jīmūtavāhana to become emperor of Vidyādharas and presented him with a chariot with golden wheels. Garutmanta vowed to stop killing serpents. Jīmūtavāhana, reunited with his wife, ruled his kingdom happily. *Kathāsaritsāgara*

Jita – Servant of Jaya and Vijaya (*brothers who were gate-keepers of Vaikuṇṭha, Lord Vishṇu's abode*). He was killed by Sages Sanaka, Sanandana and others (*in the same incident in which Jaya and Vijaya were given a Ṣāpa*), and was reborn as Mārīcha, an Asura. *Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa*

He returned to Swarga (*heaven*) after being killed by Ṣrī Rāma. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Jitāṣva – (*Also known as* **Vijitāṣva)** Son of Emperor Pṛthu. Once, Indra* stole the sacrificial horse from a Yāga being performed by Pṛthu. Jitāṣva battled Indra and recovered the horse. He got the name Jitāṣva by this action (*Jitāṣva means 'he who won the horse'*). *Mahā Bhārata*

Jitavati – Daughter of Uṣīnarapati, a dear friend of the wife of Prabhāsa, the eighth Vasu. The Vasus incurred a Ṣāpa* by stealing Sage Vasishṭha's cow which they intended to give to Jitavati. *Mahā Bhārata*

Jīvala – He was a member of the Sabha (*court*) of Ṛtuparṇa. On the king's direction, he was helping Bāhuka (*King Nala, in disguise, due to a Ṣāpa**) who was also serving the king. One day, when Nala was ruminating on his wife with desire, he asked Nala why he was separated from his wife. *Mahā Bhārata*

Jwāla – Wife of Ṛksha. And mother of Matināra. *Mahā Bhārata*

Jwara – While Lord Ṣiva was destroying the Yāga being performed by Daksha Prajāpati*, a drop of sweat fell from his forehead. It became a terrible-looking man. The Dēvas prayed for the intensity of his fury to be reduced. Indra* said to Lord Ṣiva, "O Lord! This man is named Jwara (*literally, fever*). The earth cannot bear the heat if he is concentrated in one place. Please spread him around (*thereby reducing the intensity*). Agreeing, Ṣiva distributed Jwara among elephants, serpents, cattle, horses, birds and humans. *Mahā Bhārata*

Jyāmagha – Son of Rukmakavacha. He once waged war against a king. Unable to withstand Jyāmagha's ferocious attack, the king sued for peace and offered his daughter to Jyāmagha. He took her home but afraid of his wife Ṣaibya's reaction, told her, "This girl is your daughter-in-law". Surprised because they were childless, she asked, "How can she be our daughter-in-law when we have no son?" Jyāmagha replied that she will be the wife of the son that will be born to her in the future. They did have a son named Vidarbha later and he married the girl his father had brought home. *Brahmānḍa Purāṇa*

Jyōti – Son of a Vasu named Ahu. *Mahā Bhārata*

Jyōtirdhāma – One of the Saptarshis* in the epoch named Tāmasa. *Brahma Purāṇa*

Jyōtishmanta – Son of King Priyavrata. He ruled Kuṣa Dwīpa (*island*). He had sons named Udbhigjna, Vēṇu, Madvairatha, Lavaṇa, Dhṛta, Prabhākara, and Kapila. *Brahma Purāṇa*

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Kabandha – An Asura*. He had neither a head nor legs. He had a stomach that was eight miles wide and correspondingly long arms. He would catch people with his hands and put them in his belly. Rāma and Lakshmaṇa were caught by him while they were searching for Sīta. They were initially afraid of him but Rāma pulled Himself together and killed him with His sword. As Kabandha fell to the ground, he inquired who they were and told them that he was someone named Danu and became the way they found him due to a Ṣāpa*. He requested Rāma and Lakshmaṇa to incinerate his body and they did as he wished. Kabandha then regained his Divine form, informed them that Rāvaṇa carried away Sīta and advised them to befriend Sugrīva. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Kacha - Son of Bṛhaspati (*Guru of the Dēvas*). The Dēvas sent Kacha to Ṣukra (*Guru of the Asuras**) with a mission to learn the Mṛta Sanjīvani (*bringing the dead, Mṛta, back to life*) technique. Kacha was accepted as a disciple and was serving Ṣukra along with the Guru's other disciples, mostly Asuras. The Asuras did not like the possibility of the Dēvas learning Mṛta Sanjīvani through Kacha so they killed Kacha to prevent it. Because Kacha had become friends with Ṣukra's daughter Dēvayāni, Ṣukra brought him back to life using Mṛta Sanjīvani. The Asuras again killed

Kacha and this time, cremated his body, mixed the ashes with wine and gave it to Ṣukra. Unaware of the crime of his Asura disciples, Ṣukra drank the wine. Dēvayāni, concerned that Kacha had not returned from the forest, refused to take any food until she saw him again. Ṣukra, using his spiritual power of Yōga Dṛshṭi*, discovered the crime perpetrated by the Asuras. Recognizing the harm done by drinking wine, he pronounced a Ṣāpa* that the consumption of alcoholic beverages would be a sin. He then taught Mṛta Sanjīvani to Kacha who was in his stomach. Using the technique, Kacha came back to life and came out of Ṣukra's stomach by tearing it apart. Ṣukra died in the process and was brought back to life by Kacha using his new-found knowledge. As Kacha was leaving Ṣukra's Āṣram with the Guru's blessing after learning Sanjīvani, Dēvayāni asked him to marry her. He rejected her advances citing the fact that as his Guru's daughter, she was like a sister to him. She gave him a Ṣāpa that the knowledge he obtained will not be useful to him. Because she unreasonably gave him a Ṣāpa when he did the right thing, he gave her a counter-Ṣāpa that no Brahmin will marry her. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kacchhapi – Vīṇa (*seven-stringed musical instrument; probably the oldest*) of Sarasvati (*Goddess of Knowledge and the Arts*). *Brahma Purāṇa*

Kada – Arjuna, while he was on pilgrimage to holy places, learned about Subhadra (*Lord Kṛshṇa's sister*) through Kada. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kadruva – She was one of the many daughters of Dharaṇi and Daksha Prajāpati*. One of the wives of Kaṣyapa Prajapāti. She

gave birth to a thousand Nāga* sons. Vinata was another wife of Kaṣyapa (*wives of the same man are called Sapatni*). Once, Vinata and Kadruva, strolling on the beach, saw Ucchaiṣrava (*Indra's* horse, which emerged along with Amṛtam etc., when the Dēvas and Asuras* churned the ocean of milk*). Vinata exclaimed "What a clean, pure white horse!" Kadruva laughed and asserted that there was a black area on the horse's tail. They argued and made a wager that whichever one of them was wrong will become the other's servant. As the sun was about to set and there was insufficient light to check out the horse, they agreed to return early the next morning and settle the bet. That night Kadruva begged her children to help her win the bet (*she knew there was no black spot on the horse*) and when they all refused, threatened them with a Ṣāpa*. Finally, one of her sons coiled himself around the horse's tail making a black spot. The next morning the two Sapatnis went and checked the horse. Seeing a black area on the horse's tail, Vinata, unaware of the deception, accepted that she was wrong and became Kadruva's servant. Among Kadruva's sons were, Ṣēshu, Vāsuki, Airāvata, Takshaka, Karkōṭaka, Dhananjaya, Kāḷiya, Maṇināga, Pūraṇa, Pinjaraka, Ēlāputra and Vāmana. Jaratkāru was her daughter. *Mahā Bhārata*

Once, Aditi, another wife of Kaṣyapa approached him in a romantic mood and found Kadruva and Kaṣyapa together. She became very angry and gave them a Ṣāpa that both of them will be born as humans on the earth. Kadruva then gave a similar Ṣāpa to Aditi. As a result of Aditi's Ṣāpa, Kadruva was born as Rōhiṇi (*One of the wives of Vasudēva; mother of Balarāma*) in the Dwāpara Yuga (*third in the sequence of epochs: Kṛta, Trēta,*

Dwāpara, and Kali, which is the current Yuga). Aditi, who had a boon from Lord Vishṇu that she will be His mother in all His incarnations, was born as Dēvaki. *Brahma Vaivartha Purāṇa*

Kaikasi – Daughter of Sumāli. One day, she accompanied her father on a chariot ride. They encountered Viṣravasu on the way. Sumāli, who intended to give his daughter in marriage to Viṣravasu, directed her to go to his Āṣram and perform chores for him. She did accordingly. Viṣravasu asked her who she was. She told him she was Sumāli's daughter and expressed a desire to have children by him. He said "Since you made such a request at sunset (*sex or even the mention of it was deemed inappropriate except at night*), your children will be Asuras*." Rāvaṇa, Kumbhakarṇa, Vibhīshaṇa, and Ṣūrpaṇakha were born to her. *Uttara Rāmāyaṇa*

When she entered Viṣravasu's Āṣram, he asked her "How many times have you had a menstrual period? I will give you that many sons." She told him it was eleven times but she did not want that many sons and she asked for just one son and one daughter. Because the promise of a Sage like Viṣravasu is not alterable, Rāvaṇa with ten heads and Ṣūrpaṇakha were born to her. *Vichitra Rāmāyaṇa*

Kaikēyi – (*also known as Kaika*) Daughter of King Kēkaya. Youngest and favourite wife of King Daṣaratha. She had learnt techniques for countering Māya (*magic, of the dark variety*) tricks of Asuras* from a Muni named Dhavaḷānga. She accompanied Daṣaratha when he went to help Indra*, who was engaged in a battle with the Asura named Ṣambara. During the war, she was countering the Māyas being used by the Asuras. Pleased with the significant help she had provided, Daṣaratha offered her two

boons of her choice. She told him she would choose them when she feels the need.

Being without a son, Daṣaratha performed a Putra Kāmēshṭi Yāga* in order to beget sons. A luminous being emerged from the Yāga fire and gave Daṣaratha a bowl of rice pudding and told him sons would be born to him if his wives ate the pudding. Daṣaratha gave half the pudding to his first wife Kausalya and half to his favourite wife Kaikēyi. Each of them gave half her portion to his other wife Sumitra. His wives gave birth to four sons (*Sumitra had two sons due to the two portions she received*) and were named Rāma, Lakshmaṇa, Bharata, and Ṣatrughna. Kaikēyi loved the sons of the other wives as much as Bharata, her own son. After Rāma and His brothers were married Daṣaratha started preparations for installing Rāma as the crown prince. Kaikēyi rejoiced at the prospect. But then her maidservant Manthara approached her and tried to turn Kaikēyi against Rāma. Manthara told Kaikēyi that if Rāma becomes king, Kaikēyi would become Kausalya's servant. At least initially, Kaikēyi rejected Manthara's counsel. Manthara did not give up her effort and described in gory detail all the humiliations Kaikēyi will suffer if her son Bharata does not ascend to the throne. She reminded Kaikēyi that Daṣaratha had offered her two boons and suggested that she should use one to exile Rāma to the forest for fourteen years and the second one to have Bharata coronated as the crown prince. Kaikēyi eventually succumbed to Manthara's evil advice. When Daṣaratha came to her chambers to invite her to the celebration, she lay in bed fully covered with a blanket and would not speak with him. Daṣaratha pleaded with her for a response. She then said "I know you vowed never to break a

promise. I now want the two boons you had offered me" She then stated the two wishes Manthara had suggested. Daṣaratha was stunned and heart-broken when he heard such unexpected demands. Rāma came there to deliver on His father's promise. Kaikēyi herself gave Him clothing made from tree bark to wear during His exile. Her son Bharata was not in the city at the time. As soon as Rāma left for the forest, Daṣaratha died from grief. Bharata returned to Ayōdhya and severely rebuked his mother for her evil actions that resulted in his father's death and his beloved brother's exile. Rāma returned at the end of fourteen years, accompanied by Sīta and Lakshmaṇa. He was crowned king by Bharata. Kaikēyi was treated with the same respect accorded to Kausalya, Rāma bearing no ill-will towards her. Kaikēyi died after Rāma completed the Aṣvamēdha Yāga*. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Kākāsura – An Asura* (*Kāka means a crow*). While Sīta was sleeping by the banks of the Mandākini River he went in the form a crow, lifted the garment covering her chest and scratched her on her bosom. Rāma, seeing this, hit the crow with his arrow. In agony, Kākāsura immediately fell at the feet of Rāma begging His forgiveness. Since Rāma's arrow cannot return without causing the loss of at least one body part, Kākāsura gave up one eye to get relief from Rāma's arrow. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Kākavarṇa – Son of King Ṣiṣunāga. His son Kshēmavarma succeeded to the throne after him. *Bhāgavata*

Kakshīvanta – King of the country of Kaḷinga (*modern State of Odisha, formerly Orissa*). He directed his wife Sudhēshṇa to have a Kshētraja* son by Dīrghatama. She disliked the prospect of sex

with the Muni and sent her maid instead. The boy born to Dīrghatama and the maid is Kakshīvanta. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kakudmi – Son of Rēvata and father of Rēvati. He searched everywhere for a groom for his daughter but failed to find a suitable man. He finally took her along and went to Lord Brahma. There, he saw Apsaras* performing and waited for them to finish. Brahma asked him for the reason for his visit. He asked Brahma who would be a suitable husband for his daughter. Brahma said "All the men who were on earth when you started on your journey have perished and many millennia have passed. (*On Satyalōka, Lord Brahma's abode, one day is said to be many years on earth – the concept of a different length of a day on different worlds was generally unknown until a few centuries ago*). Now Balarāma (*Lord Kṛshṇa's older brother*) is on the earth. Give your daughter in marriage to him." He followed Brahma's advice. Kakudmi would become a Manu*. *Vishṇu Purāṇa*

Kaḷa – Daughter of Kardama Prajāpati* and wife of Marīchi. She gave birth to a son named Kaṣyapa and a daughter named Pūrṇima. *Bhāgavata*

Kāla I – (*Sanskrit for 'time'*) Daughter of Dharaṇi and Daksha Prajāpati* and wife of Kaṣyapa. Vināṣana (*literally, destruction*) and Krōdha (*anger*) were her children. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kāla II – Son of Dhruva, one of the Vasus. *Maha Bharata*

Kāḷa – One of the (*articulate*) serpents worn as ornaments by Lord Ṣiva. Once upon a time, when Ṣiva had summoned a Sabha (*court*) with the Dēvas, Kāḷa was making love to his wife and did not show up. An angry Ṣiva expelled him from Kailāsa (*Ṣiva's*

mountain abode). When he begged His forgiveness, Ṣiva told him "I will take the form of a Linga* in Gajāraṇya (*forest named Gaja or elephant*). Worship the Linga with gems from Pātāḷa. This worship will be spoiled by a Hasti (*elephant*). The two of you will fight and attain Mukti* in my company. The place is known as Ṣrī Kāḷahasti after them. (*Ṣrī Kāḷahasti Māhātmyam is a 'Sthala Purāṇa'**). *Ṣrī Kāḷahasti Māhātmyam*

Kālabhairava – Born at the behest of Lord Ṣiva (*an aspect of Ṣiva*). Once, Brahma used his fifth head to heap abuse on Ṣiva. Ṣiva created Bhairava who cut the fifth head off which then stuck to Bhairava's hand and could not be dislodged. Ṣiva advised him to seek Lord Vishṇu's help. He went to Vishṇu's abode. Vishṇu stabbed Himself between His eyebrows and asked Bhairava to collect the blood from His forehead in the skull. Even after a year of bleeding into the skull, the skull was not filled. Vishṇu instructed Bhairava to bury the skull in Kāṣi*. Bhairava did so. The place where the skull was buried is known as Kapālamōchana. Kālabhairava also helped Ṣiva in destroying Daksha's Yāga. *Ṣiva Purāṇa*

Kālaka – An Asura* female, daughter of Vaiṣvānara and mother of Kālakēyas. She worshipped Lord Brahma and received a boon from Him that her children would never lose in battle. Her sister was Paulōma. *Vishṇu Purāṇa; Mahā Bhārata*

Kālakali – An Asura*. Son of Virōchana and elder brother to Bali. He was afraid of the Dēvas and lived disguised as a banyan tree in Brindāvanam. The cattle eating the smelly leaves and fruits from the tree felt sick. Nanda and his clan worshipped Ṣiva for the

health of the cattle. Ṣiva sent Ṣankhakarṇa to pull the tree by its roots. Nanda and other elders had Balarāma and Kṛshṇa cut the tree down. *Hari Vamṣa*

Kālakavṛkshīya – A Sage. He took a crow in a cage to King Kshēmadarṣi and told him "This crow is a Trikālavēdi (*knows the past, present and future*). It can identify any thieves in your kingdom that you are unable to catch." Some soldiers in the king's service, afraid that their guilty secrets would be revealed, killed the crow. The Muni said to the king "This is absolute proof that there are thieves among your officials. Create suspicion about each other among these thieves and punish each of them. I brought a crow (*which actually did not have the power the Muni cited*) just to prove that you had thieves among your employees." He gave the names of the corrupt officials. The King punished the identified guilty officials and appointed the Muni as his Minister. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kālakauṣika – He was a Brahmin in the city of Kāṣi*. On the advice of Sage Viṣvāmitra, he bought Chandramati, the wife of emperor Hariṣchandra and harassed her with overwork. *Mārkanḍēya Purāṇa*

Kālakētu – Charioteer of Rāvaṇa. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Kālakēyas – Asuras*. Sons of Marīchi and the female Asura Kālaka. They would hide (*from the Dēvas*) under the sea during the daytime. The Dēvas requested Sage Agastya to relieve them from these monsters. He drank the ocean and held it in his mouth. The Dēvas found the Asuras and killed them. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kālanēmi – Son of Mārīcha and friend of Samudra (*God of the*

Ocean). He gave his daughter Bṛnda in marriage to Jalandhara. He was a good friend to Rāvaṇa. Rāvaṇa was fighting against Rāma and Lakshmaṇa, raining arrows on them. Lakshmaṇa was injured and lost consciousness. Hanumān was sent to bring a herb named Sanjīvani (*with the power to revive the unconscious and even the dead*). Rāvaṇa, in an attempt to prevent the resuscitation of Lakshmaṇa, sent Kālanēmi to stop Hanumān from bringing Sanjīvani and to kill him. Kālanēmi reached the mountain where the Sanjīvani plant grows ahead of Hanumān and taking the form of a Muni, sat as if performing Tapas*. He greeted Hanumān when he arrived there, pretending to be a devotee of Rāma. Realizing Hanumān was thirsty, the Asura directed him to a nearby lake knowing there was a fierce crocodile there and hoping it will kill Hanumān. When Hanumān was drinking from the lake, the crocodile grabbed him and tried to drag him into the lake. Hanuman wrestled with it and kicked it. A divine female named Dhānyamāli emerged from the crocodile, released from a Ṣāpa* that had turned her into a crocodile. She told Hanumān her story and also revealed the plot by Rāvaṇa and Kālanēmi to thwart his efforts. Hanumān then left the lake and on his way, killed Kālanēmi. Kālanēmi was reborn as Kamsa (*Lord Kṛshṇa's evil uncle*). *Mahā Bhārata; Ṣiva Purāṇa; Rāmāyaṇa*

Kālanjana – A hill. Once upon a time, there was a temple on the hill. The priest of the temple stole funds from the Dēvas and Brahmins and was reborn as a dog. When a beggar hit the dog, the (*articulate*) dog complained to Lord Rāma and suggested that being sent to that temple was the proper punishment for the beggar. *Uttara Rāmāyaṇa*

Kālāntaka – Brother of Ghanṭākarṇa and servant of Kubēra (*the God of Wealth*). *Hari Vamṣa*

Kalasapōtaka – Son of Kadruva. A Nāga*. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kaḷāvati I – Vīṇa (*stringed musical instrument, believed to be the earliest*) of Gandharva* named Tumbura. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Kaḷāvati II – Granddaughter of Daksha Prajāpati*. Daughter of Swadha (*Brahma's mind-born daughter*). Mēnaka and Dhanya were her sisters. When they went to visit Lord Vishṇu, the Sages named Sanatkumāras also happened to visit there. Kaḷāvati did not rise from her seat in respect even after seeing them. Considering the behaviour of the sisters as insulting, the Munis give them a Ṣāpa* that they will be born as mortal women. Kaḷāvati begged their forgiveness. They told her that she would become the wife of Vṛshabhānu and Rādha (*Lord Kṛshṇa's aunt and the love of His life*) would be her daughter.

They also told her that it will be due to Rādha that she would be released from the Ṣāpa and return to Swarga (*heaven*). She married Suchandra. After enjoying conjugal relations with Kaḷāvati for a long time, Suchandra was fed up with family life and leaving her, went to the Āṣram of Sage Agastya to perform Tapas*. Kaḷāvati started crying because of being abandoned by her husband. Lord Brahma came to her and said "Do not cry. I will give you a boon. Ask for anything other than your husband and Mukti*." She pleaded with Brahma saying "What use is life without a husband for a woman?" Brahma said "Live on earth for some time. Later, Kṛshṇa will give you Mukti." She was reborn as the daughter of King Bhananda of the country of Kanyākubja.

When she was born, Ākāṣavāṇi* proclaimed that her name was Kaḷāvati. She was given in marriage to Vṛshabhānu of Harivamṣa (*lineage of Hari, one of the many names of Lord Vishṇu*). Rādha was born as their daughter. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kaḷāvati III – Wife of a cowherd named Dramiḷa who lived in the country of Kanyākubja. Being childless, she went to the forest with her husband's permission, to request Sage Kaṣyapa to give her the boon of a son. Kaṣyapa was unwilling to grant her wish. However, he had a spontaneous ejaculation when he happened to see the Apsara* Mēnaka walk by. Kaḷāvati received the semen. She went home and told her husband about the semen she received. Her husband predicted that she will give birth to a saintly person and sent her to live with a Brahmin family. The son born to her was Upabarhaṇa who had been given a Ṣāpa* by Brahma.

She was performing the chores assigned to her as a servant in the house of a Brahmin. One night she was bitten by a snake and reached Vishṇu Lōka after her death. *Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa*

Kaḷāvati IV – She was the daughter of Sage Pāra and Punjikasthala. A Gandharva* named Dēvāpi asked for her hand in marriage. When the father refused the request, the Gandharva killed him. Kaḷāvati then was about to commit suicide. Goddess Pārvati (*Consort of Lord Ṣiva*) appeared to her and told her not to take her own life and that Svarōchi will be her husband. Svarōchi married her. *Manu Charitam*

Kaḷāvati V – Daughter of the king of Kāṣi*. King Dāṣārha married her. She did not, however, fulfill her role as his wife because she thought he was a sinner. She had been taught a Mantra named

Panchākshari *('containing five syllables'*) from Sage Durvāsa; her husband asked her to teach him the Mantra. She told him it is inappropriate for a wife to teach her husband. He then learnt the Mantra from a Sage named Garga. *Brahmōttara Khaṇḍa of Skānda Purāṇa*

Kaḷāvati VI – Wife of King Malayakētu. She was aware of her previous birth as a woman named Suṣīla. (*Kāṣi Khaṇḍa is a 'Sthala Purāṇa'**). *Kāṣi Khaṇḍa*

Kālayavana – (*Adopted*) Son of Yavana. Once, a Yādava insulted Garga, their priest, questioning whether he was male or female. Enraged by the insult, Garga prayed to Lord Ṣiva and wished for a son who will terrify the Yādavas. Yavana, hearing of this, took Garga and hid him in his herd of cattle. An Apsara* saw him there and fell in love with him. She had a son by Garga. Yavana raised him. He was Kālayavana. He was very strong.

After Lord Kṛshṇa defeated Jarāsandha (*father-in-law of Kamsa, Kṛshṇa's evil uncle*), Sage Nārada went to Kālayavana and said "Kṛshṇa has killed Kamsa and his allies. He has defeated even the mighty Jarāsandha. Are you remaining inactive because you do not know of His exploits or because you are afraid of Him?" Kālayavana then invaded Mathura with his barbarian army. Recognizing that if Jarāsandha attacked at the same time, it would be very hard to fight both simultaneously, Kṛshṇa did not engage them in battle. He had Viṣvakarma* build the city of Dwāraka in the middle of the ocean and moved the people of Mathura there. Kālayavana chased the unarmed Kṛshṇa. Kṛshṇa ran over hills and valleys and eventually hid in a cave. King Muchikunda, son of Māndhāta, was sleeping at the entrance to the cave (*He had helped*

the Dēvas in a war against Asuras. When the Dēvas asked him to choose a reward for his help, he wanted them to show him a place where he could sleep safely, having gone without sleep for a long time, and a boon that anyone who disturbed his sleep should be burned to ash by his very look*). Kālayavana, who came there on Kṛshṇa's trail, mistook him for Kṛshṇa and kicked him hard. When Muchikunda woke up and looked at him, Kālayavana was reduced to ashes in accordance with the boon Muchikunda had received. *Vishṇu Purāṇa; Bhāgavata*

Kali – Once, Kali, on his way to Damayanti's Swayamvara* encountered the Dēvas returning from the Swayamvara and learnt from them that Damayanti had chosen Nala. With jealousy toward Nala, Kali waited for a chance to punish him (*Kali, the personification of the current epoch when Dharma is limping along on only one leg cannot punish anyone until that person violates a Dharma*). One day, after relieving himself, Nala forgot to clean his feet and performed Sandhya (*twice-daily ablution, at Sunrise and Sunset*). Utilizing this violation by Nala, Kali went to work and possessed him. He went to Nala's cousin Pushkara and advised him to play games of chance with Nala and win his kingdom. Kali stayed with Pushkara disguised as a Brahmin. Nala wagered and lost his kingdom to his cousin and left for the forest. Kali also caused separation of Nala and Damayanti.

After King Nala learned the art of Akshahṛdaya from Ṛtuparṇa, Kali who was hiding within him came out emitting the venom of Karkōṭaka (*articulate serpent*). Fearing Nala's wrath, he identified himself. As Nala was about to give him a Ṣāpa*, Kali said to him "Please do not give me a Ṣāpa. I have been suffering from the

venom of Karkōṭaka. Anyone who praises you will be exempt from fear of me." Kali then entered a nearby palm tree. From then on, palm trees are considered cursed. *Mahā Bhārata*

After Śrī Kṛshṇa ended His incarnation, Bhūdēvi was very sad and seeing her plight, Dharma Dēva (*God of Righteousness*) started walking on one leg (*Dharma is thought to walk solidly on four legs in the first Yuga, a little less steadily on three in the second, limp along on two in the third and barely get around on one leg in the fourth*). Seeing this, Kali kicked Dharma Dēva. King Parīkshit (*Arjuna's grandson, who succeeded Dharmarāja to the Kaurava empire*) threatened to punish Kali. Kali begged Parīkshit's forgiveness. Parīkshit banished Kali from his kingdom and ruled with Dharma on four legs. *Bhāgavata*

Son of Krōdha and his wife Himsa. The parents were siblings. He was responsible for all the evil in the world and the sins and suffering of all the people. Bhūdēvi (*Goddess Earth*), unable to bear his torment complained to Lord Vishṇu. He killed Kali in His incarnation as Kalki (*this is actually supposed to happen at the end of Kali Yuga, which has a long way to go yet. Bhavishya means 'future'*). *Kalki (Bhavishya) Purāṇa*

Kāḷi I – Dēvi (*the physical form of the Supreme Being, Ṣakti, meaning "energy"*). The face of Chanḍika turned black in Her anger when she was about to kill Chanḍa and Munḍa. Dēvi, holding a sword in hand and wearing tiger skins, emerged from Her face. She was Kāḷi. She destroyed the armies of the Asuras*. She killed Ṣumbha and Niṣumbha. *Dēvī Bhāgavata; Mārkanḍēya Purāṇa*

Kāḷi II – Wife of Bhīma (*each of the Pānḍavas had at least one*

wife he did not share with his brothers, in addition to Draupadi, shared by all five) and mother of Sarvagata. *Bhāgavata*

Kāḷindi I – A lake. Sage Saubhari used to perform Tapas* near it. Once, Garutmanta* ate the king of the fish in the Kāḷindi lake. All the (*articulate*) fish in the lake approached Sage Saubhari and related the cruel act of Garutmanta. Saubhari pronounced a Ṣāpa* that Garutmanta would die if he ever entered the lake again. Garutmanta avoided the lake from then on. Kāḷīya (*a serpent king*), aware of this Ṣāpa, entered this lake and stayed there (see **Kṛshṇa)** considering it safe from Garutmanta. *Bhāgavata*

Kāḷindi II – Daughter of Sūrya (*the Sun God*). Aspiring to marry Lord Vishṇu, she performed Tapas*. Once, Kṛshṇa and Arjuna saw her on the banks of the Yamuna river where they went to bathe. Arjuna asked her "Who are you? You appear to be desirous of marrying." When she related her story (*of her desire to marry Vishṇu*), Kṛshṇa took her to His city and married her. *Bhāgavata*

Kāḷīya – Son of Kadruva. A Nāga*. He lived on the Dwīpa (*island*) of Ramaṇaka. The people on that island, in mortal fear of the serpents, used to leave food for them at the bases of trees. The serpents used to give some of it to Garutmanta* (*the only creature they feared*). Once, Kāḷīya failed to give any of his food to Garutmanta and ate it all. Upset by Kāḷīya's refusal to give up some of the food the people gave him, Garutmanta went after him. To save himself, Kāḷīya, who knew that there was a Ṣāpa* that Garutmanta would die if he went to a lake named Kāḷindi, went and hid there. Kāḷīya's presence in the lake turned the water in lake Kāḷindi poisonous. All creatures in it died. The water was no

longer potable. People were afraid to go into the lake. Lord Kṛshṇa jumped onto Kāḷīya from a nearby tree. Kāḷīya tried to bite Him but could not get a grip on Him as He was dancing on his head. The weight of Kṛshṇa was pushing his head down. Kāḷīya's Nāga wives came and begged Kṛshṇa to spare their husband's life. Kṛshṇa agreed to let Kāḷīya live if he agrees to go down to the netherworld, Pātāḷa. Kṛshṇa also guaranteed that Garutmanta will not pursue Kāḷīya once He, Krishna, agreed to spare his life. Thus reassured, Kāḷīya left Kāḷindi and returned to Ramaṇaka. *Bhāgavata*

Kalki – Son of Sumati and Vishṇuyaṣa, born in the city of Ṣambaḷa. He received his education from Paraṣurāma (*Lord Vishṇu's sixth incarnation*). He was very devoted to Lord Ṣiva from his childhood. Lord Ṣiva, pleased with his devotion blessed him with a sword, a horse and a (*articulate*) parakeet. The parakeet told Kalki about Padmāvati's disappointment at her Swayamvara* (*not only did none of the princes who attended measured upto her expectations but they all experienced a sex change and became women due to a proclamation by Lord Ṣiva*) on the island of Simhaḷa (*commonly assumed to be Sri Lanka, formerly Ceylon*), and that there is no woman more suited to be his wife than Padmāvati. Kalki went to Simhaḷa with the parakeet. Padmāvati, in the garden to take a bath, saw him and greeted him. Having heard much about Kalki through the parakeet, she decided to marry him. With her father's consent, she married Kalki. The princes seeking to marry Padmāvati, who were turned into women, requested Kalki to give them back their original forms. He told them to bathe in the Rēva river to return to their male forms. They

followed the advice, regained their male forms and went back to their home countries after bidding farewell to Kalki. Kalki is Vishṇu's (*tenth, future*) incarnation for the purpose of destroying Kali. He will fight and kill Kali and his army riding the horse and wielding the sword given to him by Ṣiva. Lord Vishṇu will take the form of Kalki, with the name Vishṇuyaṣa at the end of Kali Yuga. He will destroy evil and restore Dharma. *Kalki (Bhavishya) Purāṇa*

Kalmāsha – Son of Kadruva. A Nāga*. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kalpa – Son of Bhrami and her husband Dhruva. *Bhāgavata*

Kalyāṇamitra – Son of Sutapa. *Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa*

Kalyāṇi – Wife of Dhara, one of the eight Vasus. *Matsya Purāṇa*

Kamalāksha – One of the Tripurāsuras. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kamalapālika – Sage Vyāsa informed the Pāṇḍavas that that was the name of Bhīma's Asura wife Hiḍimbi (*mother of Ghaṭōtkacha; each of the Pāṇḍavas had at least one wife he did not share with his brothers, in addition to Draupadi, shared by all five*). *Mahā Bhārata*

Kāmandaka – A Sage. He preached about four goals of life - namely Dharma (*righteousness*), Artha (*wealth*), Kāma (*desire*) and Mōksha (*Mukti, or salvation*) to King Angarishṭha. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kambaḷa – A Nāga* king. After his death, his brother Aṣvataru prayed to Sarasvati (*Goddess of Knowledge and the Arts*) to restore Madālasa to life. She was pleased with his prayers and in addition to Madālasa, granted that Kambaḷa also will be restored to

life. She also taught him music. *Mārkaṇḍēya Purāṇa*

Kāmbhōjakaṭaka – A king. He worshipped Arjuna when he was on Digvijaya (*meaning 'Victory in all directions', tour of world conquest*). *Mahā Bhārata*

Kāmpilya – Capital city of King Drupada. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kamsa I – Eldest Kshētraja* daughter of King Ugrasēna and wife of Dēvabhāga. *Bhāgavata*

Kamsa II – Kshētraja* son of King Ugrasēna. When Ugrasēna's wife and her female cowherd friends went bathing in the Yamuna river, she had menarche while there. She thought of her husband romantically. However, an Asura* named Draviḷa took the form of Ugrasēna and had sex with her. Realizing that she was deceived, she demanded to know his identity. Then he carelessly replied that even though it is similar to prostitution, a son born out of such relations could also be strong. She angrily pronounced a Ṣāpa* that whoever is born out of their union will eventually be killed by the next incarnation of Lord Vishṇu. The boy thus born was Kamsa. He imprisoned his father and became king himself. He married the daughters of Jarāsandha, Asti and Prāsti. Ṣiṣupāla was one of his close friends and allies. Dēvaki was his uncle's daughter. Learning from Sage Nārada that the result of her eighth pregnancy will be a threat to his life, he planned to kill her. She promised to give him each of her children to kill if he spared her life. He imprisoned both her husband Vasudēva and Dēvaki and killed each of her sons as soon as they were born. When the eighth son was born, Vasudēva swapped his newborn son Krishṇa with Yaṣōda's (*wife of Nanda, a cowherd and Vasudēva's friend*)

newborn daughter Yōgamāya. She warned Kamsa when he tried to kill her that his deadly enemy is safe and growing up in Rēpalle (*Telugu name for the village better known as Gōkul*) and disappeared. Kamsa plotted various schemes and sent several Asuras to kill Krishṇa. When all his efforts failed, he invited Him to his palace on the pretence of welcoming Him to the family and had an elephant try to run over Him and had wrestlers in his employ try to kill Him. Lord Krishṇa killed everyone sent by Kamsa as well as Kamsa himself. Kamsa was the Asura King Kālanēmi in his previous birth. *Bhāgavata; Mahā Bhārata; Hari Vamṣa*

Kamsavati – Kshētraja* daughter of King Ugrasēna and wife of Dēvaṣravasa. *Bhāgavata*

Kāmuka – Daughter of Pṛthuṣrava, wife of Ayutānīka and mother of Akrōdhana. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kāmyakavana – A forest. The Pānḍavas lived in this forest briefly when they were in exile. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kāṇāchi – A Yaksha (*semi-divine beings with special magical powers including shape-shifting and invisibility*); servant to Kubēra (*God of Wealth*). He was given a Ṣāpa* by Kubēra that he would roam in the Vindhya forest because he was a friend of an Asura* named Sthūlaṣira. His brother pleaded for the means of release from the Ṣāpa. Kubēra decreed that he would be released from the Ṣāpa after he relates to Mālyavanta a story he heard from Pushpadanta. Kāṇāchi obtained his release from the Ṣāpa in that manner. *Dēvānga Purāṇa*

Kānchanamāla – Daughter of King Ṣūrasēna and wife of

Malayadhwaja. She gave birth to a daughter after being childless for a long time. The baby had three breasts. Lord Ṣiva appeared to Kānchanamāla and advised her to name her daughter Taṭātaka. In a previous life, Kānchanamāla was the daughter of Viṣvāvasu, a Gandharva* king. Her name then was Vidyāvati. *Skānda Purāṇa*

Kānchi – One of the holy places of pilgrimage with the power to confer Mukti* on visitors, previously called Satyavrata Kshētra*. Once upon a time, Brahma performed an Asvamēdha Yāga* seeking Lord Vishṇu's blessings. He asked Viṣvakarma* to build a city for the convenience of those who attend the Yāga. The city built by Viṣvakarma was Kānchi. *Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa*

Kanda – (*also known as Kantha*) A Sage. He used to perform Tapas* on the banks of the Gōmati river. Indra*, as he often did, sent an Apsara*, Pramlōchana, to disturb his Tapas. He promptly fell in love with her, married her and indulged in sex with her for several years. When Pramlōchana became pregnant Kantha suddenly regretted his downfall and became very angry with her. When she was terrified by the abrupt change in his behaviour, his semen formed like sweat on her skin. She tried to wipe it off with tender leaf branches and a girl named Mārisha was born from the semen. *Vishṇu Purāṇa*

Kanḍa – (*also known as Chanḍa*) Maid of Saptarshis*. Her husband's name is Paṣusakha (see also **Kāṭaka**). *Mahā Bhārata*

Kandaḷi – Daughter of Aurva, born as an Ayōnija (*without passing through a birth canal*). Once, Sage Durvāsa happened to witness the Apsara* Tilōttama and Sāhasika (*son of the Asura* Emperor Bali*) making love, and was tempted to enjoy worldly

pleasures himself. Aurva gave his daughter, the short-tempered Kandaḷi, in marriage to the equally irrascible Sage, Durvāsa. After some time, he was annoyed with her and decided to go back to his previous life of Tapas. However, a Brahmin boy came to the Sage and told him "It is not right to leave your wife. You two will be husband and wife for many lives and she will become better at handling her anger".

She was the progenitor of the Kadaḷi race on earth. *Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa*

Kandara – A (*articulate*) bird, of Sampāti's lineage. Son of Pralōlupa. His brother Kumka was killed by an Asura* named Vidyudrūpa. Kandara killed Vidyudrūpa to avenge his brother's death. Vidyudrūpa's wife Madaniki approached him in the form of a bird (*being an Asura, she had the ability of shape-shifting*). Kandara took her as his wife. They had a daughter named Tārkshi. *Mārkaṇḍēya Purāṇa*

Kaṇika I – A Muni of the lineage of Bharadvāja. He taught moral values to Ṣatrujaya, a king of Sauvīra. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kaṇika II – Minister of Duryōdhana. When Dharmarāja was made crown prince, an upset Duryōdhana asked Kaṇika for advice on what to do. Kaṇika taught him the intricacies of politics and advised him that enemies should be killed even if they are related. Duryōdhana had a house made of wax built for the Pāṇḍavas (*in which they were to be burnt to death*), on his advice. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kanka I – Daughter of Ugrasēna and wife of Vasudēva. *Bhāgavata*

Kanka II – Assumed name of Dharmarāja while he was incognito. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kankaṇa – Brother of Nimrōchi. *Bhāgavata*

Kāntimati I – Wife of King Supratīka and mother of Sudyumna. *Varāha Purāṇa*

Kāntimati II– Ugrapāṇḍya's wife and Vīrapāṇḍya's mother. *Skānda Purāṇa*

Kaṇva I – A Sage of Kaṣyapa's lineage. He happened to find a baby girl whom a flock of birds were protecting from the Sun's heat by spreading their wings over her, and brought her to his Āṣram. He named her Ṣakuntala and raised her as his daughter. Once, when Kaṇva went to the forest to gather kindling, King Dushyanta came to the Āṣram and fell in love with Ṣakuntala. Ṣakuntala and Dushyanta got married in the Gāndharva* manner. Dushyanta promised to send for Ṣakuntala after he returned to the capital and left before Kaṇva returned. Ṣakuntala was concerned that Kaṇva may not approve of her marriage. Kaṇva who knew of the marriage using his spiritual power of Yōga Dṛshṭi*, approved it and relieved Ṣakuntala's fear. After much time passed without Dushyanta coming to take his wife, he sent Ṣakuntala to Dushyanta with an escort of his disciples as it was not good for a married woman to stay in her parents' home. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kaṇva II – Son of Apratiratha. His son is Mēdhātithi. *Bhāgavata*

Kanyākubja – A country. A king named Kuṣanābha had one hundred daughters who became hunchbacks due to a Ṣāpa* from Vāyu (*the God of Wind*). Bṛhadatta married them and cured their

deformity. The place where they lived came to be known as Kanyākubja (*Kanya is Sanskrit for 'a virgin or girl'; Kubja is 'hunchback'*). *Rāmāyaṇa*

Kapālamōchana – This is a sacred place on the banks of the Sarasvati river. Once upon a time, Ṣukra performed Tapas* here. During the Rāmāyaṇa war, Ṣrī Rāma cut off the head of an Asura* named Mahōdara. The head flew up and landed on the hand of a Sage also named Mahōdara. However hard he tried, the Sage was unable to dislodge the head from his hand. Other Sages suggested that he bathe in the river where Ṣukra once performed Tapas. When Sage Mahōdara immersed himself, the head was dislodged from his hand. The site thereby came to be known as Kapālamōchana (*literally, freedom from skull*). *Rāmāyaṇa*

A sacred place in Kāṣi*. Once upon a time, Brahma and Ṣiva quarelled about who is greater between them. Brahma created a fifth head and used it to heap abuse on Ṣiva. Ṣiva created Bhairava who cut off Brahma's fifth head. However, the severed head stuck to Bhairava's hand and would not come off. Ṣiva advised him to seek Lord Vishṇu's help. When Bhairava visited Vaikunṭha, Vishvaksēna blocked the door and would not let him enter. Bhairava killed him and went in. With a view to helping Bhairava get rid of the skull, Vishṇu stabbed Himself between His eyebrows and asked Bhairava to collect the blood from His forehead in the skull. Even after a year of bleeding into the skull, the skull was not filled. Vishṇu instructed Bhairava to bury the skull in Kāṣi. The skull fell off his hand when Bhairava did as instructed. The place where the skull was buried is known as Kapālamōchana. *Ṣiva Purāṇa*

Kāpavya – A hunter highly skilled in archery. Dasyus (*Sanskrit for 'outcasts' or 'robbers'*) living nearby requested him to be their ruler and lived according to his guidance on righteous paths of life. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kapila I – He was Nārāyaṇa, the first Sage (*one of Nara and Nārāyaṇa duo*). *Mahā Bhārata*

Once, King Aṣvaṣira was performing a Yāga. Kapila and another Muni, Jaigīshavya, came to the Yāga hall. The king welcomed them respectfully and asked them how one should worship Lord Vishṇu so that He comes under one's control. They said "We are Lord Vishṇu; worship us." He became angry at their conceit but holding his anger in check, he said to them "I am not ignorant. Vishṇu rides a bird and holds a Ṣankha (*conch; each great warrior had a conch with a distinct sound, which they used to announce their arrival on the battlefield*) and Chakra*. Why do you speak like this?" Immediately, Kapila took the form of Vishṇu and Jaigīshavya that of the king of birds. He said "You are creating illusions. If you are really Vishṇu, where is the lotus in your navel? Where is Brahma (*who was born on a lotus extending from Vishṇu's navel*)?" A lotus grew out of Kapila's navel and Jaigīshavya became Brahma in the lotus. The king again accused them of creating an illusion. The Sages disappeared and the hall was filled with wild animals. Realizing that the Sages were responsible and in fear, he prayed to them. They reappeared and made the wild animals disappear, and said "You wanted to know how to get control of God. Know that He is in everything. We showed you all these to show you that God is omnipresent." Kapila explained to the king that a knowledgeable person who

performs his duty will attain Mukti*. *Varāha Purāṇa*

Kapila II – Daughter of Dharaṇi and Daksha Prajāpati*. Wife of Kaṣyapa. The Apsaras* Ghṛtāchi and Mēnaka were her daughters. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kapila III – A Sage. Son of Dēvahūti and Kardama Prajāpati*. He was of the lineage of Lord Vishṇu. He founded and taught Sānkhya (*one of the three great schools of Hindu philosophy*). He also debated with Sage Nyūmaraṣmi on the Vēdas. His wife was Ṣrīmati. *Bhāgavata; Mahā Bhārata*

Once, while Kapila was performing Tapas* in Pātāḷa Lōka (*the netherworld*), the sons of Sagara who were searching for the stolen sacrificial horse saw Kapila with the horse standing nearby. They assumed he had stolen the horse and tried to arrest him. When he opened his eyes, they were burned to ashes. Later, Sagara's grandson Amṣumanta came to Kapila performing a Namaskāra* without saying a word about the horse or his father and uncles. Kapila, pleased by his devotion and humility, allowed him to take the horse. He also informed Amṣumanta of the manner of his fathers' demise and that their sins will be washed away when the waters of the Ganga river are brought there. *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*

Kapōta Tīrtha* – It is a place of piligrimage on the banks of the Gautami river. One day a Lubdhaka (*a hunter*) caught one of a pair of happily living (*articulate*) pigeons and started to go home with it in a cage. The male pigeon was very sad and flew in circles around the cage. The female bird consoled the male and said that he should not be sad as death is inevitable and she wished to die

before her husband. However, the male bird jumped in the ritualistic pyre in hope of becoming food for the hunter. The hunter took pity on the bird and released the female bird. Then the female bird jumped into the pyre to reach her husband. The hunter was amazed to see this and with a Namaskāra*, asked them to teach him the right path. They said to bathe in the Gautami river and leave the material body. As he followed their advice, a flying vehicle arrived and took him to Swarga (*heaven*). The place where he bathed in the Gautami river on the advice from the Kapōta (*pigeons*) is named Kapōta Tīrtha. *Brahmānḍa Purāṇa*

Karambha I – Son of Danu and brother of Rambhu. These brothers, desiring to obtain sons who could defeat the Dēvas, enter a Hrada (*Sanskrit for 'lake'*) and performed Tapas* there. Indra* took the form of an alligator and killed them. *Dēvi Bhāgavata*

Karambha II – Wife of Akrōdhana and mother of Dēvātithi. *Mahā Bhārata*

Karandhama – (*also known as Karandhana*) Eldest son of Khanīnētra and his wife Ativibhūti. His actual name was Kardama (*Balāṣva*). When the ministers and people were fed up with Khanīnētra with his extreme ways, they pulled him down and enthroned Karandhama. He tried to avoid the mishap of his father by donating all the wealth of the kingdom away and living in austerity. Enemy kings at that time surrounded the city, defeated Karandhama and banished him from the city. He acquired spiritual powers by performing Tapas* in the forest and when he rubbed his hands, horses, chariots, soldiers and wealth streamed from them on a daily basis. Since all these arose from rubbing his

hands, he was called Karandhama. With his new found wealth and army, he defeated all his enemies and reclaimed the kingdom.

He married Vīra, daughter of Vīryachandra, and they had a son. As soon as the baby was born, Karandhama invited astrologers and asked them what his horoscope indicated about his future. They told him that the planets Jupiter (*Guru*) and Mars (*Budha*) were in a favourable aspect with no evil planets looking at him. Because he was being seen only by auspicious planets, his father decided to name him Avīkshit. Avīkshit became proficient in archery and other weapons. He went to the Swayamvara* of Viṣāla, daughter of King Viṣāla. The other princes at the Swayamvara, jealous of him, banded together, attacked him, defeated him and tied him up. Avīkshit's father, learning of his son's defeat and capture by other princes, came with his army, defeated the princes arrayed against his son and released him. Viṣāla said she would still marry him. Avīkshit refused to marry her because she had witnessed his defeat. Karandhama returned to his city with his son. Avīkshit took a vow of celibacy. As much as Karandhama begged him to marry, he did not agree. As his mother was performing a Vrata* called Kimicchaka (*Sanskrit for 'whatever one wishes for'*), Avīkshit declared that he will grant anything anyone wished for. Karandhama came and wished for a grandson. Avīkshit married Viṣāla in irder to be able to grant his father's wish. Later Karandhama performed various Yāgas with the help of Angirasa and finally attained Swarga (*heaven*). *Mārkanḍēya Purāṇa*; *Mahā Bhārata; Vishṇu Purāṇa*

Kārandama – One of the Nārī Tīrthas*. *Mahā Bhārata*

Karaṭaka, Damanaka – Two characters in Panchatantra tales

(*similar to Aesop's fables, a compilation of stories focused on different aspects of human interactions narrated using articulate animal characters*). These two brothers are (*articulate*) foxes, well versed in the art of politics and in the service of the Lord of the jungle (*lion king*). They accomplished their objectives by cooperative effort and planned their actions together. Once, they convinced the lion that a bull roaming in the forest was powerful enough to be a threat to him and that he should befriend the bull. Once the bull joined the lion's service though, they observed that the lion was listening only to the bull and that their own influence had waned. Unable to accept the diminution of their power, they complained to the lion about the bull and simultaneously warned the bull that the lion was about to kill him unjustly. They turned the lion and the bull into enemies and made the lion kill the bull. *Panchatantra*

Karavīra – Son of Kadruva. A Nāga*. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kardama I – A Sage from Trēta Yuga (*the second in a repeating cycle of four epochs – they are Kṛta, Trēta, Dwāpara, and Kali. We are currently in a Kali Yuga which started when Kṛshṇa ended His incarnation*). He was a devotee of Lord Vishṇu. Lord Vishṇu appeared to him when he performed Tapas* on the banks of the Sarasvati river. He asked for a good wife in order to beget good progeny. Vishṇu told him that Swāyambhuva Manu* would offer his daughter to Kardama and Lord Vishṇu Himself would reincarnate as his son. Kardama was very happy with the prediction and continued to stay there singing the praises of Vishṇu. As predicted, Swāyambhuva came there with his daughter, Devahūti, and requested him to marry her. As advised, Kardama

married her and led a very happy life. Devahūti was performing her wifely duties and expressed a desire for children. Kardama created a flying vehicle by his spiritual power and took his wife on a tour of many lands. The couple used to bathe in the Sarasvati river. Devahūti gave birth to nine daughters. They were Kaḷa, Anasūya, Ṣraddha, Havirbhuvu, Gati, Kriya, Khyāti, Arundhati, and Ṣānti. After the daughters were born Kardama wished to renounce worldly ties (*to enter Sanyāsa, the fourth phase of a man's life, after Kaumāra [childhood], Gṛhasta, [family man], and Vānaprastha [semi-detachment from world]*). Then Devahūti requested him to get their daughters married and give her a son before he left. The son born to Kardama and Devahūti was Kapila. Kardama was one of the Prajāpatis*. *Bhāgavata*

Kardama II – He was the son of Viraja, a mind-born son of Lord Vishṇu. He left the kingdom to become a Sage. His son was Ananga. *Mahā Bhārata*

Karēṇuvati – Wife of Nakula (*one of the twin sons of Mādri, second wife of King Pānḍu, by the twin Dēvas, the Aṣvins; each of the Pānḍavas had at least one wife he did not share with his brothers, in addition to Draupadi, shared by all five*). *Mahā Bhārata*

Karkara – Son of Kadruva. A Nāga*. *Mahā Bhārata*

Karki – Son of Āpastamba and his wife Akshasūtra. *Brahma Purāṇa*

Karkōṭaka – Son of Kadruva. A Nāga*. After Vinata and Kadruva made a bet about whether the horse Ucchaiṣrava was all white or had a black spot on his tail, Kadruva first begged her children to

help her win the bet (*she knew there was no black spot on the horse too*) and when Vāsuki and the rest refused, threatened them with a Ṣāpa*. Finally, Karkōṭaka, to avoid her Ṣāpa, coiled himself around the horse's tail, making a black spot.

Once, when King Nala lost his kingdom and wandered in a forest, Karkōṭaka called out to him and said "Sir! I am falling into a fire. Please pull me out." When Nala pulled him out, he bit Nala, causing him to become deformed. He said to Nala "Do not feel sad because you are deformed now. As long as my venom is in your body, no harm will come to you from any poisonous serpent, demon or Asura*. In your present form, adopt the name Bāhuka and join the service of King Ṛtuparṇa as his chariot-driver. No one can recognise you as Nala now. When you want to regain your original form, 'think of'* me. This garment will come to you. Put it on and you will regain your form. You will also regain your wife and your kingdom." Singing the praises of Karkōṭaka will protect one from the ravages of Kali (*the present epoch, with Dharma limping along on one foot*). *Mahā Bhārata*

Karṇa – Once upon a time, before being married to King Pāṇḍu, Kunti happened to take care of hospitality for Sage Durvāsa when he visited her father. Pleased with her service, Durvāsa taught her a Mantra which had the power to bring the Dēva (*God*) of her choice who will fulfill her wishes. Intending to test the power of the Mantra, Kunti invoked Sūrya (*the Sun God*) and wished for a son like him, without losing her virginity in the process. The son born thus was Karṇa. He was born with earrings and a suit of body armor (*being natural parts of his body, they would grow as he grew*). Ashamed and afraid to reveal the birth of a son before

marriage, Kunti put the baby in a basket and left the basket in the river Aṣava. The basket eventually reached the Ganga river. A Sūta (*chariot-driver*) named Atiratha, bathing in the Ganga saw the baby boy and being childless, took him home. His wife Rādha treated him as if he was born to her and raised him with love. He was named Vasusēna. Because he was born with earrings, he came to be known as Karṇa (*Sanskrit for 'ear'*).

Although he was brought up by a Sūta (*low caste in the hierarchy*) family, he started to display qualities typical of a Kshatriya (*princely or warrior caste, second only to Brahmin in the caste hierarchy*). When he heard that Drōṇa came to Hastināpura (*capital of the Kuru empire*) to educate the princes, he also joined the group for archery. When Arjuna, one of the Pāṇḍava princes was receiving the most praise by their teacher in spite of his own superior skill in archery (*presumably because of his lower caste*) he felt humiliated. Soon, recognizing that Duryōdhana also had feelings of hatred towards the Pāṇḍavas, Karṇa befriended him.

Constant praise for the princes from the likes of Bhīshma and Dhṛtarāshṭra only added to his simmering anger and humiliation. One day, he spoke abusively to Arjuna and challenged him to an archery duel. Duryōdhana was pleased to find someone who dared to challenge Arjuna and offered his full support to Karṇa for the combat. Arjuna and Karṇa fought fearlessly equaling each other. Seeing this, Kṛpa (*the archery Guru*) asked Karṇa what his caste was that qualified him to challenge Arjuna, a scion of the Kuru dynasty and royal lineage. Karṇa hung his head and could not reply because he believed he was a Sūta. Duryōdhana intervened

and conferred kingship on Karṇa as the king of the country of Anga with status equal to Arjuna's.

Once, he requested Drōṇa to teach him the Brahmāstra (*the most powerful weapon then known*). Drōṇa refused to teach him saying that it is reserved only to those born in Brahmin or Kshatriya families. Later he learned Brahmāstra from Paraṣurāma, falsely representing himself to be a Brahmin.

Karṇa attended the Swayamvara* for Draupadi, daughter of King Drupada. He could not hit the target of the Matsya Yantra (*meaning fish machine, a spinning wheel was set up high over the floor with a small artificial fish attached to a point on the wheel. A pool of water was on the floor below the wheel – the test was to hit the fish while looking at the reflection in the pool, not directly at the fish*). Duryōdhana also failed and full of jealousy, attacked King Drupada. Arjuna with his archery skills and Bhīma with his great strength quelled the attack. Karṇa attacked a Brahmin who succeeded in hitting the target, not knowing it was Arjuna. He was defeated and assumed it was due to the spiritual power of Brahmins. He later learned that it was the Pāṇḍavas who had won the hand of Draupadi. He joined Duryōdhana in planning to dethrone the Pāṇḍavas. However, his ideas on how to accomplish the objective were quite different from Duryōdhana's. Duryōdhana proposed to send a beautiful woman to create jealousy and dissension among the Pāṇḍavas. Karṇa did not think that the Pāṇḍavas would be divided by such a plan and that in any case, that the Pāṇḍavas should be defeated by the strength of the Kauravas in open battle and not by deceit. Dhṛtarāshṭra, while he wanted to fulfill his son's desire to eliminate the Pāṇḍavas as

claimants to the throne, could not decide on a course of action. So, he summoned the elders including Bhīshma and sought their ideas on how to kill the Pānḍavas. The elders advised against even thinking of such evil goals and asked Dhṛtarāshṭra to give half the empire to the Pānḍavas. Karṇa, enraged by the advice, abused and insulted Bhīshma and the other elders.

Although the Pānḍavas did not interact with him in any of their activities either in Hastināpura or in Indraprastha or performing Rājasūya Yāga*, he continued to nurse his hatred for them because of his devotion to Duryōdhana. He just wanted to kill them in war. He was apparently unaware of the plan to defeat the Pānḍavas in rigged games of dice. He also did not like Duryōdhana's schemes to kill the Pānḍavas by fire, poison, or drowning. However, he did accompany Duryōdhana and his brothers to the Dwaita forest to enjoy observing the problems the Pānḍavas had to be enduring while they were living like Munis. Divine providence had other plans for the occasion. Karṇa was opposed and defeated by Gandharvas* in the forest. Duryōdhana, captured by the Gandharvas, was rescued by none other than the Pānḍavas. Unable to live with the humiliation of being rescued by the hated Pānḍavas, Duryōdhana was about to kill himself by Prāyōpavēṣam (*abstaining from food and sitting awaiting death*), Karṇa dissuaded him by giving him ideas on how to achieve his objective and boosting his courage. Duryōdhana agreed to return to the city.

While the Pānḍavas were incognito in the Virāṭa kingdom, as part of the terms of their penalty for losing at gambling, Duryōdhanda sent King Suṣarma of a nearby country to capture the cattle from the kingdom as a way to bring the Pānḍavas out.

Later he launched an invasion with an army led by Bhīshma, Drōṇa and Karṇa and fought Arjuna. When the elders praised Arjuna for his valour and skills in war tactics, he became angry and again he insulted them. Karṇa fought Arjuna and suffered a defeat along with the rest of Duryōdhana's army.

When the Pāṇḍavas sent an emissary for peace talks, all the elders including Bhīshma advised that it is best to make peace. However, Karṇa abused them in the full Sabha (*court*) and encouraged Duryōdhana to go to war. When Bhīshma scolded him for his shortsighted advice, Karṇa vowed that he will not assist Bhīshma in the war and that he will not take up his weapon until the fall of Bhīshma. He did not realize that the vow he made in the heat of the moment was a disservice to his friend. He remained quiet thereafter.

Later, Kṛshṇa went to Hastināpura as the emissary of the Pāṇḍavas and after discussions with Duryōdhana and company in the Sabha, took Karṇa in His chariot alone. He asked Karṇa to join the Pāṇḍavas after informing him that they are his younger brothers. He also suggested that since he was older than Dharmarāja, he would ascend to the throne. He helped Karṇa visualize the power and prestige that would be his. However, Karṇa was not tempted. He never wished to be the emperor nor considered himself inferior as a lower caste person. He also never complained that Kunti or the Pāṇḍavas were unjust to him. He never forgot the offences he and Duryōdhana perpetrated against the Pāṇḍavas. He also knew that the Pāṇḍavas would be victorious in the war. Even then he continued to support Duryōdhana, grateful for his friendship and the rewards he obtained from

Duryōdhana earlier. He also appreciated Duryōdhana considering his advice to go to war. In addition, he thought that war is the right solution to reduce the burden on the earth. He also felt that Dharmarāja, being the son of Yama (*the God of Death, known for his absolute dedication to Dharma*) was the right person to rule the kingdom.

Later Kunti also met with him on the banks of the Ganga river as he was performing his daily ablutions. She too revealed her real identity as his mother and requested him to join the Pāṇḍavas. Karṇa replied "If I change my allegiance after all this time as an enemy of the Pāṇḍavas, I will be reviled as a coward. In any case, I will certainly fight Arjuna." He did promise her that he will not harm any of the other Pāṇḍavas, took leave of her with a Namaskāra*, and left.

The war started a few days later. He did not participate for the first ten days as Bhīshma was the commander-in-chief of the army. When Bhīshma fell after unilaterally disarming and lay on a bed of arrows, Karṇa went to him alone and requested him to forgive his arrogance. Bhīshma confirmed knowing that Karṇa did not belong to the Sūta caste and advised that Kṛshṇa and Arjuna were invincible and that peace with them is desirable.

When Drōṇa became the commander, Karṇa supported him with full force. He started preparing for facing off with Arjuna. However, when Bhīma followed Abhimanyu into the Padma Vyūha*, Karṇa defeated him. He could have killed Bhīma then and there. He refrained from doing so to honour his promise to Kunti and let him go after insulting him. Similarly he spared the lives of Dharmarāja and Sahadēva when he had them in his grasp.

The natural armor and the earrings with which Karṇa was born made it impossible for anyone to defeat him while he wore them. Indra was aware of this and went to Karṇa, disguised as a Brahmin and asked for the armor and earrings as alms, to prevent his son Arjuna being humiliated by Karṇa (*disguised as a Brahmin since Karṇa, even if he thought he was born in the Sūta caste, was then a king and no king could refuse any request by a Brahmin*). He never turned away anybody who requested alms. Karṇa gave them away in spite of the strong advice he got from his father Sūrya.

Since Sūrya had already advised Karṇa that he should ask for the divine weapon Ṣakti, Karṇa asked Indra for the weapon in return for the armor and earrings. Indra was impressed with his generous nature and gave Karṇa the divine weapon Ṣakti. The weapon had the special property that it would kill anyone against whom it is deployed and Indra stipulated that Karṇa could only use it once. Karṇa wanted to use it on Arjuna even though Indra told him that Arjuna is invincible as he is under the protection of Lord Vishṇu and could not be killed by Karṇa. Duryōdhana suggested that he should use it on Kṛshṇa instead since Kṛshṇa could find someone else if Arjuna was taken out,. However, when Karṇa entered the battlefield each morning, he would forget he even had the weapon, because of a divine power. Finally when Ghaṭōtkacha employed Asura* magic in battle, Karṇa used Ṣakti to kill him. Kṛshṇa had been very concerned that Karṇa had this weapon but once Karṇa used it on Ghaṭōtkacha, Kṛshṇa felt much more confident that Karṇa could be defeated.

After Bhīshma and Drōṇa died, Karṇa became the commander-in-chief. Duryōdhana requested King Ṣalya to be Karṇa's chariot-

driver. Ṣalya agreed subject to the condition that Karṇa should not object to anything he said. However, Ṣalya, instead of helping Karṇa, always attacked Karṇa's strategies and kept praising his enemies. In accordance with a promise he had made to Dharmaraja, he constantly irritated Karṇa and caused him mental anguish by reminding him of his Ṣāpas*.

Karṇa had been given two Ṣāpas, one by Paraṣurāma and one by a Brahmin. Before the war began, he went to Paraṣurāma's Āṣram and served the Sage hoping to become an expert archer. When Paraṣurāma asked what his caste was (*in an effort to keep very powerful weapons controlled by Mantras from being learnt by someone with evil intent, protocols were established by which only someone from the Brahmin or Kshatriya caste, who had faithfully served the Guru long enough to convince the Guru that he is a good person, would be taught the Mantra*), he lied and said he was a Brahmin. He learnt Bhārgavāstra and Brahmāstra from Paraṣurāma. One day, Paraṣurāma slept with his head resting on Karṇa's lap. An insect bit Karṇa causing his thigh to bleed. However, Karṇa did not move to avoid disturbing Paraṣurāma's sleep. Paraṣurāma woke up to find a puddle of blood and realized that if Karṇa were a Brahmin, he would not have the stamina to keep his bleeding leg from moving. He then demanded that Karṇa tell him the truth about his caste. Karṇa confessed that he was a Sūta (*lower caste*). Paraṣurāma, enraged by Karṇa's deceit, told him "Since you learned these weapons from me by deceit, you will not remember the Brahmāstra when you could make best use of it, but only when you are about to die. You will not remember the Bhārgavāstra when you are in danger."

Once, while practicing his archery under Paraṣurāma's direction, Karṇa released one of his arrows which hit and killed a sacrificial calf. A Brahmin came to him and saying "You killed my calf with an arrow!", gave him a Ṣāpa that while he is immersed in battle, a wheel of his chariot will sink in the ground and the enemy whom he was trying to kill will kill him instead.

While Karṇa was worried about the Ṣāpas that had been heaped on him, Ṣalya was constantly warning him about the bad omens that he experienced. Karṇa, while abusing not only Ṣalya but everyone from his country, fought the Pāṇḍavas with renewed strength and courage and after defeating Dharmarāja, engaged Arjuna in direct combat. The Dēvas and Asuras all came to watch this epic battle. Karṇa and Arjuna were fighting to a standoff, with each shooting down the Astras deployed by the other. The difference was that the divine Kṛshṇa was the charioteer for Arjuna whereas Karṇa's charioteer Ṣalya was also his worst critic. Karṇa deployed the Sarpamukhāstra (*weapon with a serpent's face*) causing Arjuna's crown to fall. Because of the Brahmin's Ṣāpa, Karṇa's chariot sank in the mud. Karṇa descended from the chariot and while trying to pull it back up, called out to Arjuna that it was not proper for a warrior on a chariot to fight someone on the ground and asked Arjuna to wait until he pulled his chariot wheel up. Arjuna disregarded the request and killed the Ṣāpa-afflicted Karṇa by a divine Astra.

Satyasēna, Sushēṇa, Chitrasēna, Suṣarma and Vṛshasēna were Karna's sons.

Karṇa was an Asura named Sahasrakavacha in his previous life. He had a thousand suits of armor. Nara and Nārāyaṇa were able to

break all but one. He took birth with the remaining armor. Nara and Nārāyaṇa took birth as Arjuna and Kṛshṇa respectively to kill him. *Mahā Bhārata*

Karṇikāra – Son of Jaṭāyu (*articulate bird*). *Matsya Purāṇa*

Karōṭaka – Son of Kadruva. A Nāga*. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kārtavīryārjuna – He was the son of Kṛtavīrya of the Haihaya dynasty. *Bhāgavata*

He ruled his country from the city of Māhishmati, close to the Vindhya mountains. Garga was his royal priest. He worshipped Dattātrēya influenced by his priest Garga's preaching. The heat from the exhalation from Dattātrēya's Apāna (*lower orifice*) burned Kārtavīrya's arms. He, however, continued to serve Dattātrēya. Dattātrēya asked him "I am strongly attached to my wife (*indicating not much spiritual power*). Why do you keep worshipping me?" Kārtavīrya said "I know you are Lord Vishṇu", and sang His praises. Dattātrēya, pleased by his devotion, asked Kārtavīrya to choose a boon. Kārtavīrya requested and received boons that he would have a thousand arms, that he would always win in war, and that he will have a kingdom to rule.

Once, Agni (*the God of Fire*) came to Kārtavīrya and asked him for food. Kārtavīrya gave him permission to consume the entire forest of Girinagara. As it happened, the Āṣram of Maitrāvaruṇa (*son of Varuṇa, the God of Rain*) was located in that forest. Agni burned it down. Angry with Kārtavīrya, Maitrāvaruṇa's son gave him a Ṣāpa* that Paraṣurāma (*sixth incarnation of Lord Vishṇu*) will cut his arms off.

Kārtavīrya was performing only righteous deeds since then,

fearful of the Ṣāpa. However, his sons were immoral and evil and committed plenty of misdeeds.

Once, having heard that Kārtavīrya was very strong, Rāvaṇa came seeking a fight with him. At the time, Kārtavīrya was indulging in a sexual orgy with women on the banks of the Narmada river. Rāvaṇa ridiculed him saying "Is this womanizing man capable of fighting me?" Hearing of this, Kārtavīrya came, attacked Rāvaṇa, defeated him and held him captive. Then, Pulastya (*Rāvaṇa's grandfather*) came and got Rāvaṇa released by begging Kārtavīrya.

Once, Kārtavīrya's sons went to Sage Jamadagni's Āṣram when he and his sons were away and stole Jamadagni's Yāga cow and her calves. An enraged Paraṣurāma went to their city and killed Kārtavīrya. *Mahā Bhārata*

(*A slightly different version of the end of Kārtavīrya's life*) Kārtavīrya, on a hunt, stopped by Jamadagni's Āṣram to visit the Sage. The Sage received him with full hospitality and provided him and his large retinue a sumptuous feast from provisions created by the spiritual power of his Yāga cow. Kārtavīrya asked the Sage for the cow. Jamadagni refused his request. Kārtavīrya sent his army and had the Sage killed. However, the cow could not be captured. Instead, troops created by the cow drove the king's forces helter-skelter. Paraṣurāma, informed of the murder of his father, invaded Kārtavīrya's city, killed him and burned his city down. *Uttara Rāmāyaṇa; Mārkaṇḍēya Purāṇa*

Karūṣa I – A Dēṣa (*country*). Indra*, by killing the Asura* Vṛtra, acquired the heinous sin of Brahma Hatya (*Sanskrit for 'killing a Brahmin'*) and thereby became subject to hunger and covered in

cowdung (*Karīṣa; corrupted into Karūṣa in usage*). Some Munis helped clean him of the Karīṣa, which then fell on this country, causing it to be called Karūṣa. Originally, the country was fertile and prosperous. However, Tāṭaka, a female Asura destroyed the place and killed the people who lived there. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Karūṣa II – Son of Vaivasvata Manu*. Younger brother of Ikshvāku. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Karūṣa Dēṣa – A kingdom ruled by Dantavaktra. *Bhāgavata*

Karusha – He is also known as Pṛshadhra. *Bhāgavata*

Kāsāra – Disciple of Bāshkali. He had learnt the collection of Vēdic hymns known as Vālakhilya Samhita. *Bhāgavata*

Kāṣi I – Holy place of pilgrimage on the banks of the Ganga river. Once, while Lord Ṣiva's Consort Pārvati was in Her parents' home, Her mother Mēnaka (*different from the famous Apsara**) criticized her son-in-law for lacking wealth, good looks and a home. Upset by Her mother's words, Pārvati suggested to Ṣiva that they should leave Her parents' place. Thinking that Kāṣi* would be a good place to settle in, Ṣiva told Nikumbha, chief of His Gaṇas (*guards*) that He intends to move to the city of Kāṣi and directed him to somehow expel the then-current ruler of the city, Divōdās. Nikumbha appeared in a dream of a Brahmin named Aunikumbha and directed him to see to it that a temple to Lord Ṣiva is built in the city of Kāṣi. The Brahmin related details of his dream to King Divōdās. Divōdās built the temple, installed the icon of Ṣiva and was worshipping Ṣiva daily. Ṣiva was giving every devotee what they wished for, but in spite of Divōdās' great devotion and desire for a son, did not bless him. After a while, angry and disappointed

that his wishes for boons had not been satisfied, Divōdās had the temple dismantled. Nikumbha was enraged by this act of destruction of his Lord's temple and gave the city a Ṣāpa* that it would become an uninhabited place. Afterwards, he brought Ṣiva and Pārvati there. It is one of the cities by living in which, Mukti* becomes attainable. *Brahmānḍa Purāṇa*

Kāṣi II – Son of Kāṣya and father of Rāshṭra. *Bhāgavata*

Kāṣya – Son of Suhōtra and father of Kāṣi. *Bhāgavata*

Kaṣyapa – A Brahmin. He knew how to treat victims of poison. When the Nāga* Takshaka, disguised as a Brahmin, was on his way to bite Parīkshit (*Abhimanyu's son, Arjuna's grandson*), he encountered Kaṣyapa. The fake Brahmin asked Kaṣyapa "Who are you? Where are you going?" Kaṣyapa replied "I am Kaṣyapa. Having heard that Takshaka was going to kill Parīkshit with his venom, I am going to his palace to use my skill to revive Parīkshit and obtain wealth as a reward." The fake Brahmin then said "I am Takshaka. What good is your skill? Why do you exert yourself in vain? Go back." The two argued for a while. Takshaka challenged him to revive a nearby tree after he bit it. When Takshaka bit the tree, the tree and a Brahmin on it burned to ashes. Kaṣyapa used his skill and brought both the tree and the Brahmin back to life. Afraid that Kaṣyapa could undo the harm he intended to do to Parīkshit, Takshaka himself offered to give him money and asked him what he desired. Kaṣyapa took much wealth from Takshaka and went back home. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kāṣyapa – A Brahmin. When Sages Atri and Gautama were engaged in a fierce argument in the Sabha (*court*) of King Pṛthu,

he suggested that no one other than Sanatkumāra is capable of adjudicating the dispute and that they should all go to see him. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kaşyapa Prajāpati* – Son of Sage Marīchi (*mind-born son of Sūrya, the Sun God*). He married Aditi, Diti, Danu, Kāla, Anāyu, Simhika, Krōdha, Pṛtha, Nisva, Vinata, Kapila, and Kadruva, and expanded the creation further. Dēvas, Dānavas (*another name for Asuras**), humans, animals, and trees are all his offspring. *Mahā Bhārata*

Once, Aditi went to him wanting to make love to him and found him with Kadruva. Upset and disappointed, she gave a Ṣāpa* that he would be born as a mortal being. He took birth as Vasudēva and Aditi (*who had the special privilege of being Lord Vishṇu's mother in all His incarnations*) was born as Dēvaki. *Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa*

Once, Aditi wanted the Yāga cows of Varuṇa (*the God of Rain*). Kaşyapa stole them for her. When Varuṇa asked for the return of the cows, Kaşyapa refused to return them. Varuṇa gave him a Ṣāpa that he would be born on earth and informed Brahma of Kaşyapa's misdeed. Brahma also gave Kaşyapa the same Ṣāpa for the crime of stealing another's property. When Kaşyapa begged Brahma's forgiveness, Brahma said "Do not worry. Vishṇu will be born as your son." *Dēvī Bhāgavata*

Whenever Lord Vishṇu took birth, Kaşyapa was His father. Vāmana was also his son and in the incarnation as Rāma, he was Daşaratha (*Rāma's father*). *Rāmāyaṇa*

Kāşyapi – The earth. Paraşurāma (*Lord Vishṇu's sixth incarnation, in which He was a Brahmin and went on a campaign*

to rid the earth of kings and princes), after decimating Kshatriyas, donated the entire land on earth to Sage Kaṣyapa. Kaṣyapa then distributed the land among Brahmins and went away to perform Tapas*. The earth thereby came to be known as Kāṣyapi. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kāṭaka – (*Telugu for 'famine'*) Once upon a time, there was a severe famine when survival was very difficult. The Saptarshis* and Arundhati (*wife of Sage Vasishṭha, one of the Saptarshis*), along with their servant maid Chanḍa (*aka Kanḍa*) and her husband Paṣusakha were wandering around a forest looking for food. They gathered around the corpse of Nīla, son of Aja, which was being cremated, prepared to eat it. A king named Vṛshādarbhi saw them and offered them food. They declined his offer, saying they will not accept food from a king. The king went home, gave his minister (*likely a Brahmin, from whom the Sages might accept help*) some artificial, golden fruit to take to them. The minister went and offered the fruit but the Sages said they will not accept gold. The minister went back and informed Vṛshādarbhi of their refusal. The king, furious with the Sages now, performed a Yāga. Kṛtti, a female Asura*, emerged from the sacred fire of the Yāga. The king ordered her to go to the Sages and attack them.

By that time, the Saptarshis, accompanied by someone named Ṣunassakha, entered a pond to gather lotus stems to eat. As they were starting to gather lotus stems, Kṛtti told them the pond is hers and asked them who they were. Realizing that she intends to harm them, the Ṛshis told her who they were. Ṣunassakha killed her by beating her with a stick. The Ṛshis and their retinue entered the pond to perform ritual ablutions, leaving the lotus stems on the

edge of the pond. When they came back, the stems were nowhere to be seen. The Sages could not determine who took them. Each described the sin of which he would be guilty if he had stolen them. Ṣunassakha, though, said whoever took them was a great man. The Sages turned on him and accused him of taking the stems. Ṣunassakha revealed himself as Indra* and took them all to Indra Lōka (*Indra's abode, heaven*). *Mahā Bhārata*

Kātyāyana I – A descendant of Viṣvāmitra. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Kātyāyana II – Son of Gōbhila. *Dēvī Bhāgavata*

Kātyāyani – Wife of Yāgjnyavalkya. *Brahmānḍa Purāṇa*

Kaurava – Son of Kadruva. A Nāga*. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kaurava Princes – The names of the one hundred sons of Gāndhāri and Dhṛtarāshṭra collectively known as the Kaurava Princes are listed below:

Abhaya, Ādityakētu, Agrayāyi, Alōlupa, Anādhrishya, Anūdara, Anuvinda, Aparājita, Apramāthi, Ayōbāhu, Bahvāṣi, Balāki, Balavardhana, Bhīmabala, Bhīmaratha, Bhīmavēga, Bhīmavikrama, Bṛndāraka, Chāruchitra, Chitra, Chitrabāṇa, Chitrāksha, Chitrakunḍala, Chitrānga, Chitravarma, Chitrāyudha, Dhanurdhara, Dīrghabāhu, Dīrgharōma, Dṛḍhahasta, Dṛḍhakshatra, Dṛḍharathāṣraya, Dṛḍhasandha, Dṛḍhavarma, Durādhara, Durdharsha, Durmada, Durmarshaṇa, Durmukha, Durvigāha, Durvimōchana, Duryōdhana, Dushkarṇa, Dushparājaya, Dushpradharshaṇa, Dussaha, Duṣṣala, Duṣṣāsana, Jalasandha, Jarāsandha, Kanakadhwaja, Karṇa, Kavachi, Krathanakunḍa, Kunḍabhēdi, Kunḍadhāra, Kunḍaṣāyi, Kunḍāṣi, Mahābāhu, Mahōdara, Nāgadatta, Nanda, Nishangi, Pāṣi,

Pramatha, Raudrakarma, Sadāsuvāk, Saha, Ṣala, Sama, Ṣarāsana, Sattva, Satyasandha, Sēnāni, Sōmakīrti, Subāhu, Suhasta, Sulōchana, Sunābha, Sushēṇa, Suvarcha, Suvarma, Ugra, Ugrasēna, Ugraśravas, Ugrāyudha, Upachitra, Upanandaka, Ūrṇanābha, Vātavēga, Vikarṇa, Vikaṭānana, Vinda, Vīrabāhu, Viraja, Virāvi, Viśālāksha, Vivimṣati, Vivitsu, Vyūḍhōru.

Kauravya – A descendant of Airāvata, a son of Kadruva. A Nāga*. Father of Arjuna's wife Ulūchi (*each of the Pānḍavas had at least one wife he did not share with his brothers, in addition to Draupadi, shared by all five*). When he learned that Arjuna will have to suffer some time in Naraka (*hell*) due to a Ṣāpa* by the Vasus, he found out from the Vasus the means by which Arjuna can avoid this fate, and informed his daughter. *Mahā Bhārata; Jaimini Bhārata*

Kausalya I – Daughter of Bhānumanta, the king of Kōsala country. One day, while she was taking a stroll in the garden, she happened to see Daṣaratha. She fell in love with him on first sight. She sent Daṣaratha her ring by her pet parrot. Bhānumanta had also intended to give his daughter in marriage to Daṣaratha. Receiving an invitation from him, Daṣaratha embarked on a journey to Kōsala accompanied by a full retinue. On his way, he was carried away by a flooded river.

The Asura* Rāvaṇa had heard that he would be killed by a son born to Kausalya. He abducted her and put her in a large cabinet in the middle of the ocean intending to kill her. By a remarkable coincidence, Daṣaratha ended up in the same cabinet as the river flowed into the ocean. They got married right there.

Sage Nārada advised Rāvaṇa that it was not a manly thing to kill

Kausalya and suggested he should kill her son instead. Heeding the advice, Rāvaṇa abandoned the idea of murdering Kausalya. A giant articulate bird named Jaṭāyu carried the couple to Ayōdhya, Daṣaratha's city. As Kausalya remained childless for a long time, Daṣaratha performed a Putra Kāmēshṭi Yāga*. A luminous being emerged from the Yāga fire and gave Daṣaratha a bowl of rice pudding and told him sons would be born to him if his wives ate the pudding. Kausalya ate some of the pudding and gave the rest to Sumitra, another wife of Daṣaratha. Lord Vishnu Himself was born to Kausalya as Rāma.

Just as Rāma was about to be coronated as crown prince, Kaikēyi, Daṣaratha's third wife, demanded that Rāma be exiled to the forest for fourteen years. As soon as Rāma left for the forest, Daṣaratha died of grief. Kausalya stayed alive, though, because of her love for her son. After Rāma completed His exile, was coronated to the throne of Ayōdhya and performed an Aṣvamēdha Yāga*, she passed away. Kausalya was Aditi in a previous life (*mother of Indra* and Vishṇu*). *Rāmāyaṇa*

Kausalya II – Wife of Yayāti's son Pūru and mother of Janamējaya (*different from Abhimanyu's grandson*). *Mahā Bhārata*

Kauṣika I – A Brahmin. He performed Tapas* for many years. Goddess Sāvitri appeared to him and asked him to choose a boon. He said he only wanted a great inclination towards performing Tapas. She granted his wish but added "Good things will happen to you. Yama (*the God of Death*), Kāla (*one of the Bhairavas*) and Mṛtyu (*personification of death, as a female*) will come to you." She then disappeared. These three then came to him and invited

him to ascend to heaven but said he had to leave his body to do so. They told him that they came only to take him to Heaven. At that moment, King Ikshvāku (*Progenitor of Lord Rāma's dynasty*) arrived there. Kauṣika said to him "You are my guest. What can I give you?" Ikshvāku replied "I am the king. I am always one who gives, not one who takes. Ask me what you want and I will give it to you." Kauṣika responded "Those who are in a worldly life phase accept things. I am in a renunciation phase. I cannot take anything. Also, it is not wrong for any guest, even a king, to accept something offered in worship." Ikshvāku countered with "In that case, I want your Tapahphala (*fruit of Tapas*). What is the nature of the fruit of your Tapas?" Kauṣika said "I did not perform Tapas with any objective. I, therefore, do not know the nature of the fruit of my Tapas." When the king said he cannot accept something of unknown nature, Kauṣika pointed out that it was wrong for Ikshvāku to reject an offering after agreeing to accept it and it would make Kauṣika guilty of speaking untruth. As the argument was going on, Kauṣika threatened to give a Ṣāpa* to Ikshvāku if he insisted on not accepting his offering. Afraid of receiving a Ṣāpa, the king extended his hand. Using water to symbolize his offering, Kauṣika gave up his Tapahphala to Ikshvāku. Ikshvāku then said "Water fell on my palm. Should good things not happen to both of us as a result? I am hereby giving you the fruits of my Yāgas. Accept them." Two strangely dressed men then arrived and introduced themselves as Kāma (*desire*) and Krōdha (*anger*). They informed Kauṣika and Ikshvāku that the entire incident with Yama, Kāla and Mṛtyu was a test and that they had done very well. Brahma and the Dēvas showered both of them with flowers in

appreciation for their goodwill. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kauṣika II – A Brahmin. He used to constantly sing beautifully in praise of Lord Vishṇu. Many people would join him and sing along. Once, the king of Kaḷinga country (*present-day Odisha, formerly Orissa*) came to him and asked him to sing about him, to enhance his reputation. Kauṣika and his disciples refused to sing about anyone but Vishṇu. The king ordered his troops to sing praises of him. They started to do so in very loud voices. Kauṣika and his group, accustomed to hearing prayers to none other than Vishṇu constantly, plugged their ears to avoid hearing the troops'singing. The king ordered them to leave. Lord Vishṇu took Kauṣika and his group to Vishṇu Lōka (*His world*) and honoured them. Goddess Lakshmi Herself came to hear them sing. She asked Sage Tumbura to sing along with them. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Kauṣika III – A Brahmin. Once, as he sat under a tree chanting Vēdic hymns, a crane sitting on the tree defecated on him. Kauṣika, angered by this, looked up. The crane burned to ashes by his glance. Afterwards, he went to a house for Bhiksha*. The housewife, even though she saw him, continued to attend to her husband's needs for a long time. She finally came to give him Bhiksha only after her husband went to sleep. Very angry to be kept waiting, Kauṣika demanded to know why she kept him waiting so long. She replied "Sir! I could not bring you Bhiksha until now because I am taking care of my husband. Why do you look at me with anger? The crane was burned due to your angry glance, but it cannot hurt me at all." Surprised, he asked her "How do you know about the incident with the crane?" She told him that she knew because she was a Pativrata* and lived a life of Dharma

(*bound by righteousness*). She instructed him in some aspects of Dharma and told him to seek out a man named Dharmavyādha in the city of Mithila if he wanted to learn more. Curious to see what he could learn from Dharmavyādha, Kauṣika proceeded to Mithila. He found Dharmavyādha selling meat. Doubtful whether to approach him or not, he stood a little distance away. Dharmavyādha looked at him, greeted him with a Namaskāra* and said "Sir! That Brahmin lady must have sent you. Please accept my hospitality." Surprised to hear that he knew that the Brahmin lady had sent him, Kauṣika asked him "If you abide by Dharma, why do you kill animals? How can a meat-seller be bound by Dharma?" Dharmavyādha replied "Sir! My Dharma (*in this context, it means duty*) is to sell meat. I would be violating my Dharma if I did not do that. It is wrong for each person not to perform his duties." He also taught Kauṣika many aspects of Dharma.

Dharmavyādha then took Kauṣika to his home, showed him his parents and explained that he received all his knowledge because he properly performed his duty to his parents. He revealed to Kauṣika that he taught aspects of Dharma to him only because the Pativrata had sent him but he was not pleased to see him. He explained that his distaste was due to the fact that Kauṣika, whose parents needed him to take care of them, neglected them and immersed himself in studies. Having learnt a lot from Dharmavyādha, Kauṣika praised him saying "By your qualities, you really are a Brahmin (*while the caste system had been corrupted, mostly by the upper castes taking advantage of the lower, the original intent was not that caste would be determined by birth but by qualities and aptitudes*)." He went home and

started taking proper care of his parents. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kauṣika IV – A Brahmin. He took a vow of truthfulness and was performing Tapas*. One day, some people being chased by robbers ran and hid near his Āṣram. The robbers chasing them came to him and asked "Where are the people who came running here?" Afraid to break his vow, he told them where the group that came earlier were hiding. The robbers caught the people, took all their valuables and killed them. Due to his part in the robbers'crime, Kauṣika went to Naraka (*hell*). *Mahā Bhārata*

Kauṣika and Chittasēna – The Asura* brothers Hamsa and Ḍibhaka. They served Jarāsandha like his right and left arms under these names. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kauṣika's wife – Her name was Sumati. Kauṣika was a leper, but his wife served him with devotion. Once, Kauṣika saw a woman and lusting for her, he asked his wife to take him to her. Disgusted by his demand but considering it her duty to do whatever her husband wants, she was taking him there in the dark of night. On the way, Kauṣika happened to touch open wounds on the shoulder of a man named Māṇḍavya who had been impaled on a stake as punishment for a crime. Enraged by the pain caused by this, Māṇḍavya cried out a Ṣāpa* that whoever caused his pain by touching his sore shoulder will die before the next sunrise. Kauṣika's wife, hearing his cry and afraid that her husband would die, gave a Ṣāpa that the sun shall rise no more. The sun stopped rising and the world went dark. Indra* and other Dēvas prayed to Lord Brahma to dispel the darkness. Brahma told them that only Anasūya is capable of doing that. They went to Anasūya and

begged her for her help. Anasūya, aware that the sun was not rising because of a Ṣāpa by the great Pativrata*, the wife of Kauṣika, went to her and asked her to allow the sun to rise. Anasūya promised to bring Kauṣika back to life if he dies as a result of sunrise. Kauṣika's wife then ordered the sun to rise. The sun rose, Kauṣika died and Anasūya resurrected him. *Mārkaṇḍēya Purāṇa*

Kauṣiki – Dēvi (*the Supreme Being*). The Dēvas complained to Goddess Pārvati that two Asuras*, Ṣumbha and Niṣumbha were stealing their portions of Havya* and requested Her help to stop them. Kauṣiki emerged from Her body.

Asuras named Chaṇḍa and Muṇḍa, followers of Ṣumbha and Niṣumbha (*powerful Asuras who had a boon from Ṣiva that no male can kill them*) once saw Kauṣhiki and told Ṣumbha that no woman was more beautiful than her and that the life of any man who did not have sex with her was a waste. Ṣumbha and Niṣumbha sent an emissary named Sugrīva (*different from Lord Rāma's Vānara ally*) to Kauṣiki to ask Her to marry them. Kauṣiki sent Lord Ṣiva as an emissary to tell Ṣumbha and Niṣumbha that She will marry only the one who defeats Her in battle and that She would kill Ṣumbha and Niṣumbha if they did not retreat to Pātāḷa (*the netherworld*). She acquired the name Ṣivadūti because Ṣiva acted as Her emissary. Furious with Her, Ṣumbha and Niṣumbha sent the commander of their armies, Dhūmralōchana to capture Kauṣiki and bring Her to them whereupon She turned him into water. They then sent Chaṇḍa and Muṇḍa with an army; She killed them too. Finally, Ṣumbha and Niṣumbha came, fought Her and were killed by Her. *Mārkaṇḍēya Purāṇa*

Kaushītaki – A Muni. He once summoned his son and told him "I worshipped Āditya (*another name for Sūrya, the Sun God*) as a single entity which is why you are my only son. You should worship him as a Deity with the many attributes (*the Sun's rays*) acording to Udgītha Praṇava and you will have many sons. " *Chāndōgya Upanishad*

Kautsa – Disciple of a Muni named Varatantu. On finishing his education, he insisted that his Guru accept Guru Dakshiṇa*. The Guru said he did not want anything but Kautsa refused to listen to the Guru. The Guru relented and said "Give me one crore (*ten million*) gold coins for each of the fourteen subjects I taught you." Kautsa approached King Raghu (*ancestor of Lord Rāma. The dynasty was known as Raghu Vamṣa in his honour*) to obtain the wealth his Guru demanded. The king had just completed a Yāga known as Viṣvajit as part of which he had given away everything of value he owned. The king, lacking even the metal vessel to give Arghya (*water offered to guests and Deities during worship, to clean their hands and feet*), used an earthen pot. Seeing this, Kautsa told the king he already knew the king's response to the request he did not yet make. Saying he will not send someone who requested money from him empty-handed, Raghu requested Kautsa to stay in his house for two days while he arranges to procure the amount desired. Raghu then borrowed the gold from Kubēra (*the God of Wealth*) and gave it to Kautsa. *Raghu Vamṣa*

Kavēra – A Rājarshi (*royal Sage*). While he was performing Tapas* in the Himālayas, Lord Ṣiva appeared to him. He requested Mukti. Ṣiva told him that He was not the one who could grant Mukti and that Brahma has to give it. Kavēra continued his Tapas.

Brahma appeared and said "I have a daughter, Vishṇumāya. She will be born as your daughter and give you Mukti", and disappeared. Kavēra ended his Tapas and went home. A daughter was born to him and she told him "I will perform Tapas, become a river (*in the Purāṇas, rivers are anthropomorphed into women*) and give you Mukti" and with her father's permission, went to the forest. One aspect of her became Lōpāmudra (*Sage Agastya's wife*) and another aspect became the Kāvēri river. Kavēra attained Mukti by bathing in the Kāvēri river. (*Tula Kāvēri Māhāthmyam is a 'Sthala Purana'**.) *Tula Kāvēri Māhāthmyam; Agni Purāṇa*

Kāvēri – Once, a Rājarshi (*royal sage*) named Kavēra performed Tapas* directed towards Lord Brahma. By Brahma's boon, Lord Vishṇu's Māya (*power of illusion, personified as a Goddess. She was instrumental in a later epoch in saving the baby Kṛshṇa from the clutches of His evil uncle*) was born as his daughter. Kavēra's daughter took leave of her father and went to Tapōvana* intending to turn into a river (*in the Purāṇas, rivers are anthropomorphed into women*) by performing Tapas directed towards Lord Ṣiva. Meanwhile, Brahma went to Sage Agastya, informed him that the daughter of Kavēra was performing Tapas directed towards Ṣiva with the objective of becoming a river and directed him to marry her. Agastya went and saw the young woman and asked her to marry him. She informed him of her intent to become a river. Agastya, assuring her that he is agreeable to her intent, married her and placed her in his Kamanḍala*.

Sage Agastya was preparing to leave on a trip south to teach a lesson in humility to the Vindhya mountain. He entrusted his Kamanḍala (*with Kāvēri inside*) to his disciples with exhortations

to take care to protect it. They were carrying it securely. As they approached the Sahya mountain, Kāvēri, remembering her mission, flowed out as a river. The disciples, afraid of Agastya's wrath for their failure to protect Kāvēri, begged her to return to the Kamanḍala. She assured them that she had already informed the Sage that she was a river. Kāvēri became famous as "Ganga of the South". Kāvēri achieved a merger with the ocean (*Sāgara. The joining of a river with the ocean is 'Sāgara Sangamam'*). Brahma and Ṣiva then came and gave her boons. (*Tula Kāvēri Māhātmyam is a 'Sthala Purāṇa'**). *Tula Kāvēri Māhātmyam*

Kavi I – Son of Vaivasvata Manu*. He abdicated his kingdom and performed Tapas* in the forest. *Bhāgavata*

Kavi II – Son of Sage Bhṛgu and father of Ṣukra (*Guru of the Asuras**). *Mahā Bhārata*

Kēkaya I – Father of Kaikēyi (*favourite wife of King Daṣaratha who was instrumental in forcing her husband to exile Rāma to the forest for fourteen years*). Due to a boon given to him by a Siddha (*semi-divine beings with special magical powers*), he knew the languages of all animals. One day, listening to a conversation among ants, he laughed out loud. His wife asked him why he laughed. He told her that if he told her why he laughed, he would die immediately. She asked him to tell her regardless. He refused because the Siddha who gave him the boon told him not to reveal the gift to anyone. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Kēkaya II – A king. He was a ruler dedicated to Dharma (*the righteous path*). One day, when he went outside the city, an Asura* abducted him. Unable to free himself from the Asura, he

asked "The people in my kingdom all live righteous lives appropriate for their caste. What fault on my part made you abduct me?" The Asura told him "I captured you only to let you know that no harm will come to a king who protects all the castes" and went on his way. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kēraḷa – A king of the Marut dynasty. Son of Nara, who was the son of Sudhṛti. The country he ruled was named after him. His son was Bandhumanta. *Vishṇu Purāṇa*

Kēsari – A Vānara* (*father of Anjanēya*). When a pair of elephants named Ṣankha and Ṣabala were harassing pilgrims at a Tīrtha* named Prabhāsa, he killed them. Sage Bhāradvāja was pleased by his action and conferred the name Kēsari on him because he had killed elephants (*Kēsari is Sanskrit for 'Lion'. It is believed that lions are the natural enemies of elephants*). The Sage also offered a boon to him for ridding the Tīrtha of the vicious animals. Kēsari asked for a son with shape-shifting capability and great strength. Kēsari married Anjana. Ānjanēya (*Hanumān is another popular name for this great devotee of Rāma*) was born to them. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Kēṣava – Kṛshṇa killed an Asura* named Kēṣi. Sage Nārada proclaimed that He would, therefore, be known as Kēṣava. *Vishṇu Purāṇa*

Kēsi – An Asura*. He once abducted Arishṭanēmi's daughter Dēvasēna. When she cried out for help, Indra* came, killed Kēsi and rescued her. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kēṣi – An Asura*. He was sent by Kamsa (*Kṛshṇa's evil uncle*) to Gōkul (*where the baby Kṛshṇa was placed by His father to keep*

Him safe from Kamsa) to kill Kṛshṇa. Kṛshṇa killed him instead. *Vishṇu Purāṇa*

Kēṣidhwaja – Son of Kṛtadhwaja. He went to war with his father's brother Khāndikya and took his share of the kingdom as well. Once, while Kēṣidhwaja was performing a Yāga, a tiger ate the sacrificial animal. He begged every one involved to tell him how to save the Yāga. They said no one other than Khāndikya knows. He climbed on his chariot and went to Khāndikya. Khāndikya met him on the way, greeted him in a friendly manner and taught him the remedy. Pleased, he asked Khāndikya what he would like by way of a Guru's reward. Khāndikya asked only to be taught the Yōga in which Kēṣidhwaja was well-versed. He obliged and taught that Yōga to Khāndikya. *Vishṇu Purāṇa*

Kēṣini I – Wife of King Sagara (*ancestor of Rāma*). Their son was Asamanjasa. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kēṣini II – Maidservant of Damayanti (*wife of King Nala*) in Vidarbha. Damayanti directed her to learn the story of Bāhuka who accompanied Ṛtuparṇa. She informed Damayanti of Bāhuka's qualities and the fact that he embraced her son and was sad (*the proof Damayanti needed to prove that Bāhuka was her husband Nala, whose appearance was changed by a serpent bite*). *Mahā Bhārata*

Kēṣini III – Wife of Ajamīḍha. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kētumāla – Son of Āgnīdhra. He ruled a Varsha (*a region. Bharata, the real name of India, is also a Varsha*) of Jambūdwīpa (*like Pangea*). The Varsha was named after him. *Vishṇu Purāṇa*

Kētumanta I – Son of Dhanvantari (*exponent of Āyurvēda, the ancient system of medicine; Sanskrit for 'Science of Life'*). *Bhāgavata*

Kētumanta II – Son of Ṣrutāyu. He was the king of the country of Kaḷinga. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kētumanta III – Son of Ambarīsha. He left the city and went to the forest to perform Tapas* directed towards Lord Vishṇu. *Bhāgavata*

Kētumati – Wife of Sumāli. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Kēvala – Son of Saudhṛtēya and father of Bandhumanta. *Bhāgavata*

Khadga – Once upon a time, Brahma created Dēvas, humans, animals and other things. They were all acting in accordance with their nature and their duties. However, the Asuras* were behaving immorally, harassing the Dēvas and Munis. Brahma performed Tapas* on the slopes of the Himālaya mountain for many years and performed a Yāga. A fierce Asura was born as a result. This resulted in dimming the light from Sūrya; tornados occurred; meteors fell. The Dēvas, terrified by these unnatural events, went to Brahma. Brahma assured them that these resulted from His Tapas and that they need not fear them. The Asura took the form of a Khadga (*Sanskrit for 'sword'*). Brahma gave it to Ṣiva, who used it to kill the Asuras. It was then given to Vishṇu. *Bhāgavata*

Khagamukha – A Brahmin. He was a friend and classmate of Sahasrapāda. Once, as a practical joke, Sahasrapāda threw a grass snake at him. Startled, he gave his friend a Ṣāpa* that he will be a

weak serpent. When Sahasrapāda begged him for a means of release from the Ṣāpa, he told Sahasrapāda that when Ruru (see **Pramadvara**) attempts to beat him, he will be released from the Ṣāpa. *Mahā Bhārata*

Khamitra – Son of Pramati and father of Chākshasha. *Mahā Bhārata*

Khāṇḍavaprastha – A place near Hastināpura (*the capital of the Kaurava empire*). It was the location where Viṣvakarma* built a city for the Pāṇḍavas. *Mahā Bhārata*

Khāṇḍavavana – A divine forest full of medicinal herbs. It was under the protection of Indra*. Once upon a time, a Rājarshi (*royal sage*) named Ṣvētaki was constantly performing a ritual with sacrificial fire. As a result, Agni was losing his brilliance and becoming ill. He went and complained to Lord Brahma who told him that the only way he can become healthy again is by consuming a forest full of divine medicinal herbs and suggested that he should consume the Khāṇḍava forest. Agni went to the Khāṇḍava forest but was unable to consume it as it was protected by Indra (*who is his superior in the hierarchy of Dēvas*). He went back to Lord Brahma and said, "I went and tried to do what you suggested but I was unable to do it. Please give me an idea that will help". Lord Brahma informed him that Kṛshṇa and Arjuna will come there and grant him the ability to consume the Khāṇḍava forest. Soon thereafter, Kṛshṇa and Arjuna were travelling through Khāṇḍava. Agni approached them disguised as an old Brahmin and told them he had been starving and requested them to provide a meal for him. When they asked what kind of food he wants, he

told them that he wanted to consume Khāṇḍava but could not as Takshaka was guarding it on behalf of Indra. They told him they had no weapons and asked him how they could help him. Agni then prayed to Varuṇa who brought them the following weapons: Chakra* and a Gada (*mace*) named Kaumōdaki for Kṛshṇa; the bow named Gāṇḍīva and a chariot for Arjuna. Thus armed, they told Agni they will protect him even if Indra opposes him and that he could do what he needed. Agni then consumed the Khāṇḍava forest. *Mahā Bhārata*

Khāṇḍikya – Son of King Amitadhwaja. He and his brother Kṛtadhwaja divided the kingdom equally and each ruled his share of it. Kēṣidhwaja, son of Kṛtadhwaja, went to war with his father's brother Khāṇḍikya and took his share of the kingdom as well. Once, while Kēṣidhwaja was performing a Yāga, a tiger ate the sacrificial animal. He begged everyone involved to tell him how to save the Yāga. They said no one other than Khāṇḍikya knows the way. He climbed on his chariot and went to Khāṇḍikya. Khāṇḍikya met him on the way, greeted him in a friendly manner and taught him the remedy. Pleased, he asked Khāṇḍikya what he would like by way of a Guru's reward. Khāṇḍikya asked only to be taught the Yōga in which Kēṣidhwaja was well-versed. He obliged and taught the Yōga to Khāṇḍikya. *Vishṇu Purāṇa*

Khanitra – (*Also known as Khanīnētra*) Son of Viṣanka. Desirous of begetting sons, he planned to give his parents a feast of meat dishes and went to the forest to kill an animal. One (*articulate*) animal came up to him and said "O! King! Kill me. I cannot bear the sadness of being without offspring. Relieve me of my misery." Another (*articulate*) animal then came to him and said "O! King!

Kill me. I have many children. I am always fearful that a tiger will kill one of my children." After hearing these two animals, Khanīnētra gave up his plan to kill animals for food and instead followed his ancestors by performing Tapas*. A son Balāṣva (*also known as Karandhama*) was born to him. Khanitra harassed his subjects and was also discourteous towards his Ministers and even his brothers. The Ministers displaced him from the throne and crowned his son Karandhama in his place. *Mahā Bhārata; Mārkanḍēya Purāṇa*

Khara – An Asura*. Son of Rāvaṇa's mother's maternal aunt. His brother was Dūshaṇa. They lived in the Danḍaka forest (*covers parts of Chattisghar, Odisha, and Andhra Pradesh states*). After the death of her husband, Ṣūrpaṇakha (*Rāvaṇa's sister*) came to live with the brothers. While she was there, Lakshmaṇa (*Lord Rāma's younger brother*) cut off her nose and ears. She ran to Khara and Dūshaṇa bemoaning her fate. Khara and Dūshaṇa attacked Rāma and Lakshmaṇa, and were killed by them. Khara's son was Makarāksha. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Khaṭvānga – One of the Bhairavas. His son was Dīrghabāhu. *Bhāgavata*

Khyāti – Daughter of Kardama Prajāpati*. Wife of Sage Bhṛgu. During a war between the Dēvas and Asuras*, the Asuras, fearing Vishṇu, hid behind her. She was protecting them. In order to get to the Asuras, Vishṇu killed her. In her dying moment, she gave Vishṇu a Ṣāpa* that He would suffer separation from His wife. It was due to this Ṣāpa that Vishṇu, in His Avatāra (*incarnation*) as Rāma suffered separation from Sīta. *Bhāgavata; Rāmāyaṇa*

Kīchaka – Brother-in-law of King Virāṭa. Simhabala was another name for him. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kimmīra – An Asura*. Younger brother of Bakāsura (see **Bhīma**). He lived in the Kāmyaka forest and harassed people. When the Pāṇḍavas were travelling through the forest in their exile, he blocked their way and threatened them. They told him "We are the Pāṇḍavas; Dharmarāja, Bhīma, Arjuna, Nakula, and Sahadēva." He roared angrily at them and saying "Do you think I will allow those who killed my brother to go as they please?", he attacked them. He and Bhīma fought, hurling trees and rocks at each other. At the end, Kimmīra was killed by Bhīma. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kimpurusha – Son of King Āgnīdhra. The country he ruled, one of nine parts of Jambūdwīpa (*ancient name for present-day Indian subcontinent*) was named Kimpurusha Varsha in his honour. *Vishṇu Purāṇa*

Kimpurushas – Semi-divine beings with special magical powers. They have human heads over horses' bodies. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kindama – A Muni. Once, he and his wife both assumed the form of deer and were making love. King Pāṇḍu, while on a hunt, mistakenly hit them with arrows assuming they were deer. The Muni, while dying from the arrow injury, gave Pāṇḍu a Ṣāpa* that he will die when he attempts to make love to his wife. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kinnaras – Semi-divine beings with special magical powers. Sons of Pulaha. They have horses' heads over human bodies. *Agni Purāṇa*

Kīrti – Daughter of Sage Ṣuka and his wife Pīvari. Wife of King Aṇuha. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kīrtimālini – Daughter of King Chandrāngada. Wife of Bhadrāyu. In a previous life, she was a prostitute named Pingaḷa. *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*

Kīrtimati – Daughter of Dharaṇi and Daksha Prajāpati*. Wife of Manu* named Dharma. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kishkindha – A country near the banks of the Pampa river. Vānaras* Ṛkshaviraja, Vāli, and Sugrīva ruled this kingdom. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Kōkilā Dēvi – Wife of King Drupada. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kōlāhala – A mountain (*in the Purāṇas, mountains are anthropomorphed into men*). Son of Himavān. He fell in love with a river named Ṣuktimati (*in the Purāṇas, rivers are anthropomorphed into women*). A son Vasupada and a daughter Girika were born to them. As the mountain was blocking the flow of Ṣuktimati, a king named Vasu kicked the mountain with his foot and cleared the flow path for the river. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kōṭara – Mother of the Asura* Bāṇa. In the early stages of the fight between Bāṇa and Lord Kṛshṇa (see **Aniruddha**), when it appeared that her son was about to be killed, she stood naked with her hair down, in front of Kṛshṇa. Kṛshṇa turned away in disgust. Bāṇa took the opportunity to run back to his castle, picked up fresh weapons and returned to the fight. *Bhāgavata*

Kōṭikāsya – Son of King Suratha. A friend of Saindhava (*brother-in-law of Duryōdhana*). He happened to see Draupadi during the

forest exile of the Pāṇḍavas and suggested to her that she should take Saindhava as her husband. She angrily rejected the suggestion. Later, when Bhīma came to attack Saindhava, he fought along with Saindhava. Bhīma killed him then. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kratu I – Mind-born son of Lord Brahma. His wife was Kriya, daughter of Kardama Prajāpati*. Their sons were the Vālakhilyas. *Mahā Bhārata; Bhāgavata*

Kratu II – Son of Ūru and husband of Sannati. *Matsya Purāṇa*

Kratusthala – A young woman. She loved a Gandharva* named Vasuruchi and wanted to marry him. A man named Yaksha wanted to marry her. Yaksha expressed his desire to her but she rejected him. Yaksha learned that she was in love with Vasuruchi. He disguised himself as Vasuruchi and approached her. Happy that the one she loved had come to her, she made love to him. She became pregnant and had a son named Rajitanābha. She later saw the Yaksha's true form and felt sad that she was deceived but not seeing any options, continued to live with him. *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*

Krauncha mountain – Son of Maināka (*in the Purāṇas, mountains are anthropomorphed into men*). Asuras* such as Mahisha, who were harassing the Dēvas, would hide in the caves of this mountain when they were chased by their enemies. Because the mountain was helpful to Asuras this way, Kumāraswāmi (*son of Lord Ṣiva*) shredded it to pieces. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kṛdha – Son of Vidarbha. *Matsya Purāṇa*

Kriya I – Daughter of Daksha Prajāpati* and Dharaṇi. Wife of Manu. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kriya II – Daughter of Kardama Prajāpati*. Wife of Kratu. *Bhāgavata*

Krōdha I – Daughter of Daksha Prajāpati* and Dharaṇi. Wife of Kaṣyapa. *Mahā Bhārata*

Krōdha II – Daughter of Kāla (*Daughter of Daksha Prajāpati* and Dharaṇi*). *Mahā Bhārata*

Krōshṭuki – A Muni. He was taught many things by Mārkanḍēya and attained Gjnāna (*wisdom*). *Mārkanḍēya Purāṇa*

Kṛpa I – Son of Succhāya and her husband Ṣishṭi. *Matsya Purāṇa*

Kṛpa II – Son of Sage Ṣaradvanta. Once, when Ṣaradvanta was performing Tapas*, Indra* as he usually did, sent an Apsara* to disrupt the Tapas. On seeing her, Ṣaradvanta was overcome with sexual desire and spontaneously ejaculated. Ṣaradvanta left that place and continued his Tapas elsewhere. His semen fell on the tip of an arrow standing vertically on the ground, split into two and became a boy and a girl. King Ṣantanu (*father of Bhīshma*), who was on a hunt nearby, saw the babies and took them home with him out of the Kṛpa (*kindness*) of his heart. They, therefore, came to be called Kṛpa and Kṛpi. Some time later, Ṣaradvanta approached Ṣantanu, informed him that they were his children, performed Kṛpa's Upanayanam* and taught him archery. The Kaurava elder Bhīshma invited Kṛpa to the Kaurava Sabha (*court*) and appointed him as archery Āchārya (*instructor; Āchārya and*

Guru both mean 'teacher', however, Guru is generally used to denote a slightly higher status than Āchārya).

Kṛpa did not passively tolerate the harassment of the Pāṇḍavas by the Kauravas. Whenever an opportunity arose, he would remonstrate to Duryōdhana that his actions were immoral. But he spoke up only when Bhīshma also did. He did not have the courage to speak up on his own. Conscious of the fact that he owed loyalty to Bhīshma (*the Kaurava elder who gave him his position*), Dhṛtarāshṭra (*the emperor, even if only in name*), and Duryōdhana (*the crown prince who was the real power*), he went along with Duryōdhana's military plans and provided honest advice when asked. He did not worry too much about the morality of those plans. When Duryōdhana embarked on the campaign to steal the cattle of King Virāṭa (*to draw out and expose the Pāṇḍavas who he suspected were hiding in his kingdom during their incognito year*), he accompanied the forces but was defeated by Arjuna and praised Arjuna's prowess.

When the Mahā Bhārata war broke out, he aligned with Duryōdhana, along with Bhīshma and fought to the best of his ability. He battled Chēkitāna, a Yādava king (*they rendered each other unconscious*) and fought and killed Sukēta among other adversaries. When Karṇa and others on the Kaurava side were boasting about the strength of their forces, he described the strength of the Pāṇḍava side to Duryōdhana. After Karṇa died, following Bhīshma's fall and Drōṇa's death, he advised Duryōdhana to stop the bloodshed and sue for peace with the Pāṇḍavas. When Duryōdhana did not heed his advice and hid in a lake, a saddened Kṛpa spoke with him and tried to give him peace

of mind. When his nephew Aṣvatthāma revealed his plan to kill the Pāṇḍavas' offspring while they slept to avenge the defeat of Duryōdhana, he tried to dissuade him citing the immorality of it but was rebuffed. He finally went to Dhṛtarāshṭra, consoled him and accompanied him to Tapōvana*. *Mahā Bhārata*

In the future (*eighth; the current, seventh is Vaivasvata*) Manvantara (*reign as Manu**) of Sūrya Sāvarṇi, he will be one of the Saptarshis*. *Vishṇu Purāṇa*

Kṛpāvati – Daughter of King Sudēva. Once, she and a female companion were noisily playing near the Āṣram of Sage Vasishṭha. The Sage, annoyed by their antics, gave Kṛpāvati a Ṣāpa* that she will be born as a Vaiṣya (*merchant caste, third in the caste hierarchy, below Brahmin and Kshatriya [warrior/princely]*). When she begged him for the means of release from the Ṣāpa, the Sage told her that she would be released when a son is born to her and fights in a war. She was reborn as Suprabha. *Mārkanḍēya Purāṇa*

Kṛpi – Younger sister of Kṛpāchārya (*his name is Kṛpa; the addition of Āchārya signifies that he was a teacher, in this case, of archery to the Kauravas and Pānḍavas*). Daughter of Ṣaradvanta. Once, when Ṣaradvanta was performing Tapas*, Indra* as he usually did, sent an Apsara* to disrupt the Tapas. On seeing her, Ṣaradvanta was overcome with sexual desire and spontaneously ejaculated. Ṣaradvanta left that place and continued his Tapas elsewhere. His semen fell on the tip of an arrow standing vertically on the ground, split into two and became a boy and a girl. King Ṣantanu (*father of Bhīshma*), who was on a hunt nearby, saw the babies and took them home with him out of the Kṛpa (*kindness*) of

his heart. They, therefore, came to be called Kṛpa and Kṛpi. Kṛpi was married to Drōṇa (*archery Guru to the Kauravas and Pānḍavas*). Their son was Aṣvatthāma. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kṛṣa – A Muni. When King Parīkshit (*son of Abhimanyu and Uttara*) placed a dead serpent around the neck of Sage Ṣamīka, he was the one who informed Ṣṛngi, son of Ṣamīka, of the atrocity. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kṛṣāṣva I – Archery Guru of Sage Viṣvāmitra. *Bhāgavata*

Kṛṣāṣva II – Son of Sahadēva (*different from the Pānḍava of the same name*). His son was Sōmadatta. *Bhāgavata*

Kṛshṇa I – Son of Dēvaki and Vasudēva. He was born from the eighth pregnancy of Devaki. His expected birth (see **Kamsa**) was the reason for the incarceration of Dēvaki and Vasudēva from the time of their marriage. However, Dēvaki and Vasudēva were not too unhappy about being in prison. They were confident that a son capable of freeing them will be born to them. As soon as Kṛshṇa was born, they rejoiced as if they had been released. It was clear right from His birth that Kṛshṇa was divine. Dēvaki's brother Kamsa, with foreknowledge from Ākāṣavāṇi* that his sister's eighth pregnancy will result in the birth of his killer, alerted the prison guards that he should be informed of the birth the moment it happened. He was determined to kill this nephew as soon as he was born. However, Kamsa's best-laid plans were foiled. As soon as Dēvaki delivered Kṛshṇa, Kamsa's prison guards fell into a deep sleep and the prison cell unlocked automatically. Vasudēva took the just-born infant son beyond Kamsa's reach to Gōkul (*the shepherd village where his other wives lived*), put Him in the bed

of Yaṣōda who had just delivered a female baby, took the baby girl back to the prison and placed her in Dēvaki's bed. A little later, Kamsa learned that Dēvaki had delivered and came, sword in hand, to kill the infant. He raised the sword and tossed the baby into the air but the baby stood up and after announcing that the one who will kill him was safe in Gōkul, vanished.

Yaṣōda was oblivious to the fact that Vasudēva had switched her baby with Kṛshṇa. She had no reason to believe that Kṛshṇa was not her son and was raising Him. Vasudēva sent his priest Garga to the village to see his son to make sure He was safe. Garga went to the house of Nanda, where Kṛshṇa was growing up, saw the boy and reported that He who was white-skinned originally had become black (*Kṛshṇa is Sanskrit for 'black' or 'dark'*). Henceforth, He was known as Kṛshṇa.

Having learnt from the vanishing baby girl that his killer was growing up in Gōkul, Kamsa tried mightily to find and eliminate the one known threat to his life. Unable to find Dēvaki's son, he had his men kill all boys there. Sent by Kamsa, an Asura* named Tṛṇāvarta came in like a tornado and as he carried Him high into the air, Kṛshṇa suddenly became very heavy. Unable to carry the heavy weight of the boy, Tṛṇāvarta fell to the ground. Kṛshṇa then killed him. A female Asura named Pūtana assumed the form of a beautiful woman and set out to kill Kṛshṇa. Unable to identify Him, she went on killing male children by giving them her poisonous breast milk. She went to Yaṣōda's house too and pretending to adore the baby, proceeded to give Him her breast. Kṛshṇa sucked the life out of the Asura who dropped dead and returned to her original form. In spite of all these failures, Kamsa

did not give up his efforts to have Kṛshṇa found and killed. Several Asuras, including Dhēnuka, Baka, and Kēṣivyōma came to kill Kṛshṇa and instead were themselves killed by Him. By destroying so many evil Asuras, He showed His greatness even during His childhood.

Kṛshṇa was a very naughty boy. His acts of mischief, however, were pleasing to everyone. When He stole milk and butter from some house, they laughed indulgently rather than trying to punish Him. When the mischief became excessive, they would complain to Yaṣōda. Once, when several women complained to her about His antics, she tied Him to to a heavy stone mill used to grind grains. He crawled, pulling the mill along. The mill got stuck between two trees. He pulled hard on it. The trees broke and fell to the ground. Two Gandharvas* Nalakūbara and Maṇigrīva (*sons of Kubēra, God of Wealth*) emerged from them, released from a Ṣāpa* Sage Nārada had given them, greeted Kṛshṇa with a Namaskāra* and went on their way.

One day, some boys playing with Kṛshṇa came to Yaṣōda and told her that Kṛshṇa ate some mud. Yaṣōda summoned her son and asked Him if He did eat mud. Saying "Mother! Am I a fool? Am I mad? Would I eat mud? Check my mouth", He opened His mouth. Yaṣōda saw all fourteen worlds inside and realized that her son was the universe.

In spite of the great deeds Kṛshṇa had already performed as a boy, he played with the shepherd boys as one of them. He accompanied them to the grazing grounds with cows, a bag with lunch slung on His back. Once, while the cows were grazing on the banks of the Yamuna river, an Asura took the form of a calf and

was killing the calves. Recognizing the calf as an Asura, Kṛshṇa killed him. As the cattle were being guided back home, they drank water from a lake named Kāḷindi. The water of the pond having been poisoned by the venom of the (*articulate*) serpent named Kāḷīya, the cows died. Kṛshṇa brought the cows back to life and climbing a nearby tree, jumped onto the hood of Kāḷīya. The serpent tried to bite Him but his hood sank under the weight of Kṛshṇa. Kāḷīya's wives begged Kṛshṇa to spare his life and He let him live.

Once, Lord Brahma created an invisible cave in the forest where Kṛshṇa and His fellow shepherds were herding the cattle and hid all the cows and shepherds in it. After looking for them everywhere, Kṛshṇa realized by His divine sight that Brahma was using Māya (*illusion*) to test Him. Kṛshṇa Himself then became not only all the other shepherds but also all the cows and calves and went to the homes of each of the shepherds. He kept this up for a full year without anyone suspecting that there was anything amiss. Finally, Brahma, realizing His Māya is no match for Kṛshṇa's (*Vishṇu's*) divine power, visited Kṛshṇa and praised Him.

One day, a wildfire occurred in the forest. The shepherds were frightened and requested Kṛshṇa for help. He asked them all to close their eyes while He swallowed the fire. The superhuman exploits of Kṛshṇa during His childhood were amazing and indescribable.

Once, Kṛshṇa's adoptive father Nanda was planning to perform a Yāga to propitiate Indra*. Kṛshṇa stopped him, saying "Why a Yāga for Indra? Instead, if you wish, do things to please the mountains, cows and Brahmins." Indra became furious and rained

rocks on Gōkul. Kṛshṇa assured everyone that He will take care of them and lifted the Gōvardhana mountain with one finger like an umbrella and invited all the people and the cattle to shelter beneath it. Indra, feeling ashamed at his own foolishness, came and greeted Him with a Namaskāra.

Kṛshṇa and His older brother Balarāma received their education from Sāndīpa. They struck up a friendship with a fellow disciple Kuchēla there. Even after He ascended to the throne, Kṛshṇa did not forget His friendship with this poor Brahmin. He ate with relish the fistful of fried rice Kuchēla brought to Him as a gift. Without being asked for anything, He gave to Kuchēla much wealth and many valuable possessions. When Kṛshṇa and Balarāma asked Sāndīpa what he wanted as Guru Dakshiṇa*, Sāndīpa said to them "With capable disciples like you why should I lack anything? However, My son drowned while bathing in Prabhāsa Tīrtha* and never came back up. Bring him back." Balarāma and Kṛshṇa rode their chariot to the ocean and summoning Samudra (*the Ocean God*), asked him to return their Guru's son. Learning from Samudra that an Asura named Panchajana had swallowed him and that the boy is now in the court of Yama (*the God of Death*), they went there and asked Yama to give them their Guru's son. Realizing that the brothers were aspects of Lord Vishṇu, Yama complied with their request, revived Sāndīpa's son and handed him over to them. Kṛshṇa and Balarāma returned the Guru's son to him.

All the Gōpikas (*Sanskrit for 'female shepherds'*) were madly in love with Him. His good looks, His virtues, and more than anything else, His music on the flute enthralled them. Whenever

Kṛshṇa played the flute, they were mesmerized. They forgot their work, their families and even themselves and crowded around Him. Kṛshṇa also enjoyed their company. One day, many young Gōpikas disrobed, put their clothes on the banks of the Yamuna river and were bathing. Kṛshṇa approached their clothes stealthily, picked them up and sat on a branch of a nearby tree. When they realized they would have to come out from the water naked, they were bashful and begged Kṛshṇa to give their clothes back. He made them come out of the water, raise their hands in a Namaskāra to Him before giving their clothes back. (*While this appears to be a mischievous prank, especially since Kṛshṇa was quite young at the time, there is a spiritual context to the event in that as He later elaborated in the Bhagavad Gīta, He was God and no one could hide anything from Him anyway*)

While the whole world loved Him and rejoiced in His boyhood antics, His evil uncle Kamsa's hatred for Him grew ever more intense. Kamsa was frustrated by the failure of all his earlier attempts to kill Kṛshṇa while He was in Gōkul. Kamsa then had Akrūra go to Gōkul and invite Kṛshṇa and Balarāma to Mathura. They accepted the invitation. While strolling on the streets of Mathura, they saw a washerman taking Kamsa's laundered clothes to him. They asked him to give the clothes to them. When he refused, Kṛshṇa killed him and distributed the clothes to children playing in the street. They then went to the house of a flower-seller and bought garlands. They put fragrant Sandalwood paste on their skins. Kamsa, learning that they had in fact arrived in Mathura, ordered his elephant driver to have the elephant crush them to death. When the driver of Kamsa's elephant named Kuvalayāpīḍa

tried to run them over, they killed the elephant and the driver, foiling yet another of Kamsa's attempts on their lives. Kamsa next sent two champion wrestlers, Chāṇūra and Mushṭika to somehow kill the brothers. Kṛshṇa and Balarāma wrestled with the two and killed them.

Hearing of the carnage being caused by the brothers, Kamsa ordered them evicted from the city. Kṛshṇa ignored Kamsa's order, went to Kamsa and killed him in unarmed combat. He released His parents from Kamsa's prison, and crowned Kamsa's father Ugrasēna. Kṛshṇa visited Kamsa's maidservant Kubja (*a hunchbacked woman*) who lived in the city and by touching her, cured her hunchback and made her beautiful.

Kamsa's father-in-law Jarāsandha learned of this and with the assistance of Kālayavana, he invaded the city of Mathura. Jarāsandha by himself was invincible (*he had a boon that he could not be killed with any weapon*). Being joined by Kālayavana (*who had received a boon that no Yādava could kill him*) made him even more dangerous. Kṛshṇa, therefore, did not engage them in battle but built the city of Dwāraka in the middle of the ocean and moved the people of Mathura there. Kālayavana chased the unarmed Kṛshṇa. Krishna ran over hills and valleys and eventually hid in a cave. King Muchikunda (*he had helped the Dēvas in a war against Asuras. When the Dēvas asked him to choose a reward for his help, he wanted them to show him a place where he could sleep safely, having gone without sleep for a long time, and a boon that anyone who disturbed his sleep should be burned to ash by his very look*), son of Māndhāta was sleeping at the entrance to the cave. Kālayavana, who came there on Kṛshṇa's

trail, mistook him for Kṛshṇa and kicked him hard. When Muchikunda woke up and looked at Kālayavana, he was reduced to ashes in accordance with the boon the king had received. Kṛshṇa then came out of the cave and greeted Muchikunda who realized Kṛshṇa was an incarnation of Lord Vishṇu and sang His praises. Even though Kālayavana had died, Jarāsandha did not stop harassing Kṛshṇa. Due to fear of him, Kṛshṇa hid for some time on the Pravarshaṇa mountain.

Several evil kings were conspiring together to deceive Kṛshṇa. But His fame was already spreading far and wide. Even cloistered princesses who never left the Antahpura* have been hearing His name and of His exploits. Rukmi, son of King Bhīmasēna (*not one of the Pānḍavas*) wanted his sister Rukmiṇi to be given in marriage to Ṣiṣupāla (*Kṛshṇa's cousin who was predestined to die by Kṛshṇa's hand*). His old father, without saying a word to him, announced a Swayamvara* for Rukmiṇi. Evil men including Kamsa, Jarāsandha and Ṣiṣupāla were friends of Rukmi. Rukmiṇi, ever since she heard Kṛshṇa's name, wanted to marry Him. Rukmiṇi, aware of her brother's intentions was concerned about whether Kṛshṇa will attend the Swayamvara. Suspecting that her brother and his friends might be planning to harm Him, she sent Kṛshṇa a message by an old Brahmin urging Him to carry her away and marry her in the Rākshasa (*against the will of the girl's family, by force*) manner. Kṛshṇa honoured her request, abducting Rukmiṇi in front of all the assembled princes and kings, putting her in His chariot and driving away. Rukmi followed Him to fight Him. Rukmi caught up with Kṛshṇa, hurled insults at Him and challenged Him to a fight. Kṛshṇa subdued him easily, tied him to

the wheel of His chariot and wanted to kill him. However, Balarāma advised against His intention. Kṛshṇa then shaved Rukmi's head (*a grave insult, equivalent to death*) and let him go.

Sūrya (*the Sun God*) gave a Maṇi (*diamond*) named Ṣyamantaka to Satrājit, who had prayed to him with devotion. This very special Maṇi produces large quantities of gold for its owner every day. Satrājit's brother, Prasēna asked for it and Satrājit gave it to him.

Earlier, Kṛshṇa had requested Satrājit to give the Maṇi to Him but Satrājit refused. One day, as Prasēna was walking in the forest holding the big Maṇi in his hand, a lion, attracted by the glittering jewel, killed him and grabbed the Ṣyamantaka. Jāmbavanta (*a powerful, articulate bear*) killed the lion, took the Maṇi and gave it to his daughter Jāmbavati.

An allegation that Kṛshṇa killed Prasēna for the Maṇi was raised. Kṛshṇa, in order to disprove the allegation, set out to find the Maṇi. In the forest, He found the bodies of Prasēna and the lion. Tracking footprints leading away from the scene, he found Jāmbavati playing with the Maṇi. As He was taking the Maṇi, Jāmbavanta returned to the cave and challenged Kṛshṇa, shouting "Who are you, stealing my diamond?" A fight ensued between Kṛshṇa and Jāmbavanta over the Maṇi (*there is a story that Jāmbavanta, who was prominent in the Rāmāyaṇa war, expressed a desire for a hand-to hand fight with Rāma, just to test his own strength and Rāma promised him that such a fight will occur during His incarnation as Kṛshṇa*). The fight lasted twelve days during which Jāmbavanta, who had never before encountered anyone who was his equal in strength or endurance, realized He was a great man and presented the Maṇi and his daughter

(*becomes one of Kṛshṇa's eight wives*) to Kṛshṇa. Kṛshṇa then returned the Maṇi to Satrājit.

About this time, it was learned that the Pānḍavas perished in the fire that consumed a house of wax. As soon as He heard this, Kṛshṇa went to Hastināpura. No one there would give Him the true story. While He was there, Ṣatadhanva (*Satrājit, Satyabhāma's father, gave her in marriage to Kṛshṇa after promising her to Ṣatadhanva*), encouraged by Akrūra and Kṛtavarma, killed Satrājit. Satyabhāma informed Kṛshṇa of this dastardly deed. Kṛshṇa immediately returned to Dwāraka and attacked Ṣatadhanva to avenge His father-in-law's death. Ṣatadhanva requested Akrūra's help. Akrūra, afraid of Kṛshṇa's rage, ran away far from Dwāraka. Ṣatadhanva alone then fought Kṛshṇa and was killed by Him. When Akrūra left the city, a drought gripped Dwāraka. Told that the drought will end only if Akrūra returns, Kṛshṇa facilitated Akrūra's return by giving an assurance that he will not hurt Akrūra.

Once, Indra came to Kṛshṇa and complained that an Asura named Naraka stole the ear ornaments of Aditi (*mother of Indra and Vishṇu*) and Indra's royal umbrella, named Varuṇacchatra. Kṛshṇa went to war against Naraka to retrieve the stolen objects. His Consort Satyabhāma accompanied Him. He killed Naraka, released the sixteen thousand women Naraka had kept captive and took them to Dwāraka. He then went to Indra's city and returned Aditi's ornaments. On His way back from Indra's city, He took the Pārijāta tree from Indra's garden Nandana. Indra tried to stop Kṛshṇa from taking the tree. Kṛshṇa fought and defeated Indra and returned to Dwāraka.

Kṛshṇa also married Kāḷindi, Mitravinda, Bhadra, Nāgnajiti, and Lakshaṇa in addition to Rukmiṇi, Jāmbavati, and Satyabhāma. Also, in addition to these eight wives, he had romantic relations with sixteen thousand princesses whom He rescued from Naraka. Once, Sage Nārada wanted to check how He manages all these women and keeps them happy, he went to the house of each of the wives in quick succession. He saw Kṛshṇa with each wife.

Kṛshṇa attended the Swayamvara for Draupadi, but not with any intent of marrying her (*Due to Draupadi's marriage to the Pāṇḍavas and His sister Subhadra's later marriage to Arjuna, a brother-sister relationship developed between them*). He, therefore, did not attempt to hit the mechanical fish on a rotating wheel on the ceiling, looking only at its image in a pool of water on the floor. He went only to observe and enjoy the proceedings. A fringe benefit for Him was that He saw His aunt Kunti's sons for the first time. He introduced Himself to them and as time went on, developed bonds of strong friendship and affection for them. Kṛshṇa, intending to give Subhadra in marriage to Arjuna in spite of His brother Balarāma's aversion towards the Pāṇḍavas, invited him to come to Dwāraka disguised as a Yati (*Sanskrit for 'ascetic'*). Balarāma, unaware that the Yati was Arjuna, put Subhadra in charge of attending to the Yati's needs. While performing chores for the Yati, Subhadra asked him about Arjuna. The Yati revealed to her that he was Arjuna. Subhadra went away blushing. Kṛshṇa then arranged some festivities on nearby islands. Balarāma went there with a retinue. Kṛshṇa performed Subhadra's marriage with Arjuna at that time with many Brahmins in attendance. Now united by marriage as well as friendship, Kṛshṇa

and Arjuna became even closer than before. Once, Agni (*the God of Fire*), disguised as a Brahmin, requested the assistance of Kṛshṇa and Arjuna to consume the Khāṇḍava forest. Agni brought a conch (*each great warrior had a conch with a distinct sound, which they used to announce their arrival on the battlefield*) and the Chakra* and presented them to Kṛshṇa to help Him in the battle against Indra (*who would oppose the destruction of the Khāṇḍava forest*). When Indra arrived to protect the forest, it was Arjuna who did most of the fighting against him. Kṛshṇa only stood by and provided support.

At that time, Kṛshṇa had many enemies among the kings. The main reason these kings opposed Him was that He would not tolerate their cruelty to their own subjects and towards each other. As one example of this behaviour, Jarāsandha became His enemy because He tried to rescue the princes whom Jarāsandha incarcerated and was planning to execute. Jarāsandha, joined by the brothers Hamsa and Ḍibhaka often attacked Mathura. Due to the boons they obtained, they were invincible. Other evil kings including Ṣiṣupāla were their allies and shared animosity towards Kṛshṇa. Kṛshṇa, unable to withstand these attacks, fled Mathura. Hamsa and Ḍibhaka pursued Him. It was next to impossible for Kṛshṇa to defeat them in battle. Kṛshṇa decided they must be destroyed by subterfuge. Kṛshṇa, with His fertile brain, came up with a plan to eliminate the brothers. He was aware that the bond of affection between Hamsa and his brother was so strong that if one died, the other will die of grief. He spread a rumour that Hamsa had died in battle. When Ḍibhaka heard the rumour, he instantly killed himself. Later, on seeing the corpse of Ḍibhaka,

Hamsa died. That left Jarāsandha as Kṛshṇa's only major problem.

Dharmarāja, considering the performance of a Rājasūya Yāga*, sought Kṛshṇa's advice. Kṛshṇa encouraged Dharmarāja, hoping to accomplish the elimination of hostile kings as part of the Yāga. First, Kṛshṇa, Arjuna and Bhīma disguised themselves as Brahmins and went to Girivrajapura (*Jarāsandha's city, shielded by mountains surrounding it*). When Jarāsandha offered them gifts of new clothes, they proclaimed "We are Kshatriyas. Fight us." (*The reason they went in Brahmin disguise is to use kings' code of conduct, which requires them to offer to a Brahmin whatever he desires as well as to honour any promise made*) Bhīma fought, and with Kṛshṇa's help, killed Jarāsandha. Kṛshṇa did not accompany the Pānḍavas on the rest of the victory campaign against kings. Bhīma, Arjuna, Nakula, and Sahadēva accomplished Digvijaya (*meaning 'Victory in all directions', tour of world conquest*). Bhīshma proclaimed, in the royal assembly, that only Kṛshṇa was eligible to be the Guest of Honour. Saying someone of the Yādava (*cowherds*) caste was ineligible for any honour, Ṣiṣupāla harshly criticized Kṛshṇa and Bhīshma. Kṛshṇa used His Chakra to sever Ṣiṣupāla's head right there in the Sabha (*court*). As Ṣiṣupāla's body fell to the ground his Tējas* rose from the body and merged with Kṛshṇa (*Ṣiṣupāla and his brother Dantavaktra were the third incarnations of Jaya and Vijaya, Lord Vishṇu's gatekeepers who were born as His sworn enemies due to a Ṣāpa*). Dharmarāja's Rājasūya was successfully completed. Kṛshṇa (*with His major enemies eliminated*) returned to His city.

After Kṛshṇa killed Ṣiṣupāla, his brother Sālva was very angry with Him. With an intense desire to defeat Kṛshṇa and destroy the

Yadu dynasty, he performed Tapas* directed towards Lord Ṣiva. When Ṣiva appeared, he asked for a vehicle that could fly and be beyond the ability of Garutmanta* and Gandharvas to outrun. Ṣiva commanded Maya* to construct such a vehicle for Sālva. Using this vehicle Saubhaka, Sālva attacked Dwāraka. Kṛshṇa just returned from Indra's city (*after returning Aditi's ornaments*) in the middle of the fierce fighting in Dwāraka and joined the battle against Sālva. A man then descended from the sky accompanied by a fake Vasudēva and saying "Dēvaki sent me to you". Sālva then grabbed hold of the fake Vasudēva and saying "Here! I am killing your father right now", he beheaded the Vasudēva look-alike and put the severed head in his plane. Kṛshṇa was grief-stricken on seeing this. Some Munis came and consoled Kṛshṇa, telling Him that He should not succumb to grief like ordinary humans. Kṛshṇa, recovering His courage, noticed that the corpse purported to be that of Vasudēva had disappeared and concluded that it was an illusion created by the Asura. He then destroyed Saubhaka with His mace and killed Sālva using His Chakra. Ṣiṣupāla's brother Dantavaktra attacked Kṛshṇa to avenge his brother's death at His hands. Kṛshṇa killed him. Next He killed Dantavaktra's other brother Vidūratha. Paunḍraka Vāsudēva, king of Karūṣa accompanied by the king of Kāṣi* accosted Kṛshṇa and threatened Him saying "I am Vāsudēva. You adopted my name by deceit. Either renounce the name or fight me." Kṛshṇa killed him.

While Kṛshṇa was occupied fighting various evil men, He did not receive any news of the Pānḍavas. Upset by hearing from Yuyudhāna (*another name of Kṛshṇa's friend Sātyaki*) about the games of chance, loss of their kingdom, and exile in the forest, He

went to the forest to see them.

Once, while the Pāṇḍavas were in the forest, after Draupadi herself finished eating (*the significance being that once Draupadi ate and cleaned the Akshaya Pātra, the bowl that provided the Pāṇḍavas with all the food they needed for themselves and any guests, it will not provide any food until the next day*), Sage Durvāsa arrived with hundreds of Brahmins with the intent to humiliate the Pāṇḍavas (*at the behest of Duryōdhana and Ṣakuni*). Even though he was aware that the Akshaya Pātra will yield no food until the following day, Dharmarāja requested the uninvited guests to stay for dinner after taking a bath. Kṛshṇa arrived just then. Draupadi explained their plight to Kṛshṇa. As if by magic, the Akshaya Pātra, which should have been spotless, happened to contain one grain of rice. Kṛshṇa ate it and rubbed His stomach saying He was full. The Brahmins bathing in the river immediately felt as if their stomachs were full. They said they cannot eat anything at all. Afraid to face Dharmarāja and tell him that they cannot eat, they went back without bidding farewell to the Pāṇḍavas.

After conversing briefly with the Pāṇḍavas there, Kṛshṇa next saw them at Abhimanyu's wedding after they completed their year incognito. Following the wedding, He advised them in the royal court that if the Kauravas refuse to return their share of the empire to them, they must wage war and win it.

King Drupada's court priest was sent as an emissary of the Pāṇḍavas to the Kauravas, but it did not appear that the Kauravas had any intention of giving up any part of the empire they had been enjoying for thirteen years. War appeared inevitable. Arjuna

went to request Lord Kṛshṇa for His help. Duryōdhana who reached there earlier, finding Kṛshṇa fast asleep, sat behind (*above, due to his vanity as the Kaurava emperor*) Kṛshṇa's head. Arjuna, typically modest, sat at Kṛshṇa's feet. Kṛshṇa, 'waking up', saw Arjuna first and noticed Duryōdhana's presence later. Kṛshṇa told the two of them to choose between Him (*it was understood that He would provide only moral support and help, not active fighting*) and His vast army. He asked Arjuna to choose first. Arjuna chose Kṛshṇa, and Duryōdhana gladly agreed to take Kṛshṇa's army. The question arises – why did Kṛshṇa not counsel Arjuna and Duryōdhana that peace is preferable to war, even though He had earlier said a peaceful resolution is good for everyone? Could it be that He favoured war?

After Arjuna and Duryōdhana left, Kṛshṇa went to the Upaplāvya forest where the Pāṇḍavas were staying. At the same time, Sanjaya (*Dhṛtarāshṭra's constant companion and aide*) came there and was describing Dhṛtarāshṭra's state of mind to Dharmarāja, which was basically that he did not decide on a course of action. Kṛshṇa subsequently went to Hastināpura to negotiate peace. Dharmarāja requested Kṛshṇa to try for a peaceful settlement at any cost. Bhīma and Arjuna went along as they usually followed Dharmarāja's lead. However, Draupadi did not like the idea of peace. She sorrowfully described to Kṛshṇa all the humiliations she had suffered at the hands of the Kauravas and wanted to see them die in war. Even though Kṛshṇa's stated purpose was to make peace, His soothing words to Draupadi did not indicate that He was for peace at any cost.

Kṛshṇa went to Hastināpura (*the Kaurava capital*) with His

weapons including His mace and Chakra, in His chariot. The city was colourfully decorated in His honour. Every hospitality was extended to Him. Kṛshṇa told Duryōdhana the purpose of His visit. Duryōdhana invited Kṛshṇa to dinner in his palace. Kṛshṇa declined the invitation, saying "I will not eat your evil food." He had dinner in Vidura's (*he was the son born to a servant maid sent to Vyāsa by Ambika in her place. He was an advocate for the righteous path and therefore favoured the Pānḍavas which did not endear him to Duryōdhana or Dhṛtarāshṭra*) house instead. By making His partisanship for the Pānḍavas clear in this manner, Kṛshṇa left no doubt about the outcome of His mission. In the royal Sabha, He spoke to Dhṛtarāshṭra in the way appropriate for him and similarly tailored His message to Duryōdhana. Duryōdhana, with the aid of his brothers, actually tried to bind Him with ropes. It was then that Kṛshṇa showed His Viṣvarūpa (*the entire Universe embedded within Him*). Bhīshma and the other older, wiser men in the Sabha sang His praises. Duryōdhana and his cohort refused to give the Pānḍavas any part of the empire. Before leaving Hastināpura, Kṛshṇa met with Karṇa and revealed to him the fact that he was also Kunti's son and therefore, it was inappropriate for him to oppose the Pānḍavas. Karṇa, of course, refused to switch his loyalty.

Kṛshṇa returned to the Pānḍavas. He told them that peace was not possible and helped them make preparations for war. He became Arjuna's chariot-driver. The rival armies marched to the battlefield. Arjuna was mentally disturbed on seeing the armies arrayed against each other, and in particular revered figures like Bhīshma in the enemy camp. He told Kṛshṇa that he did not desire

the kingdom that can be his only by killing relatives and Gurus. That was when Kṛshṇa instructed him in the reality that while he, Arjuna actually would perform the physical act of killing, it is really His, Kṛshṇa's work (*the gist of the Bhagavad Gīta*). Kṛshṇa directed and controlled the entire course of the war on the Pānḍavas'side. He would determine when they should fight each stalwart on the Kaurava side. When an enemy warrior (*such as Bhīshma or Drōṇa*) is invincible by force, Kṛshṇa would devise a ruse to defeat him.

For example, knowing that Bhīshma would disarm when faced with someone not a virile male, He put Ṣikhanḍi (*born female and sex-changed to a male*) in front of Arjuna and had Arjuna fire arrows from behind. One day, Arjuna vowed that he would kill himself if he does not kill Saindhava (*Duryōdhana's brother-in-law who was instrumental in the ambush of Abhimanyu and preventing any Pānḍava warriors from coming to his aid*) before the Sun set that day. The Kaurava leaders heard Arjuna's vow. Stalwart warriors including Drōṇa and Karṇa were guarding Saindhava (*if they managed to keep Saindhava alive past sunset on the next day, the war would essentially end in a victory for the Kauravas because after Arjuna's suicide, the Pānḍavas would have neither the will nor the ability to fight the Kauravas*). Arjuna could not find Saindhava anywhere. Lord Kṛshṇa created an artificial sunset (*by blocking the Sun, momentarily, with His Chakra*). Saindhava emerged from hiding, jubilant that Arjuna will now kill himself. Kṛshṇa immediately recalled the Chakra and Arjuna shot Saindhava with an arrow, severing his head. Then to kill Drona, He had Dharmaraja say "Aṣvatthāma, the elephant, has

died." and had drums beaten loudly while Dharmarāja was saying "the elephant", so that Drōṇa would think that his son had died. Drōṇa did in fact, think so and gave up fighting. In this manner, He had whoever was not vulnerable in a fair fight killed or removed from the arena by subterfuge.

Eventually, Karṇa became commander-in-chief of the Kaurava army. Before entering the battlefield, Karṇa had planned to use a very special weapon he had learned (*weapons were deployed using Mantras; 'learning' a weapon means learning the Mantra which turns an ordinary arrow into a smart, powerful weapon*), to kill Arjuna. But as soon as he saw Kṛshṇa and Arjuna he would forget the Mantra. If Kṛshṇa were not Arjuna's chariot-driver, Arjuna would have been killed by Karṇa's arrows. Kṛshṇa made Arjuna fire arrows at Karṇa and kill him while Karṇa's chariot wheel was stuck in the mud and Karṇa was trying to pull it out (*the military code of ethics and Arjuna's own personal moral code would have forbidden a fight while one of the warriors is not ready*). When Duryōdhana, devastated by the death of all his great commanders, hid in a lake, Kṛshṇa sent Bhīma to hurl insults at him and draw him out. He also signaled Bhīma to hit Duryōdhana's thigh (*hitting below the waist was forbidden*) with his mace. Bhīma did so and killed Duryōdhana. When Balarāma, enraged at the unfair tactic, was about to attack Bhīma with his signature weapon, a plow, Kṛshṇa pacified him, giving a version of events that was not entirely true. After Duryōdhana's death, Aṣvatthāma, who had promised the dying Duryōdhana that he would destroy all the descendants of the Pāṇḍavas, deployed a weapon against the unborn child in the womb of Uttara (*widow of Abhimanyu*) after

killing all other sons of the Pānḍavas and their born and unborn children. It was again Kṛshṇa who rescued the child Parīkshit. Throughout the Mahā Bhārata war, Kṛshṇa managed all aspects of it and fulfilled His mission of destroying the evil and protecting the good.

On His way back to Dwāraka at the end of the war, He happened to be passing near the Āṣram of Sage Udanka and stopped by to visit him. Udanka blamed Kṛshṇa for being responsible for provoking the Pānḍavas and Kauravas into war and threatened to give Him a Ṣāpa. Kṛshṇa did not get angry at this. He revealed to Udanka the fact that He is the Supreme Being and showed him His Viṣvarūpa (*the entire Universe embedded within Him*). Pleased by the Sage's devotion, Kṛshṇa offered him a boon. Udanka said "What boon do I need other than a vision of you?" When Kṛshṇa insisted that he choose a boon, Udanka told Him that the land around his Āṣram is drought-stricken and asked that plenty of water be available whenever needed. Kṛshṇa gave him the boon and returned to Dwāraka.

Kṛshṇa had sons named Pradyumna, Chārudhēshṇa, Suchāru, Bhadrachāru and others by Rukmiṇi; Drāma, Chakra and others by Satyabhāma; Sāmba by Jāmbavati; Mitravanta by Mitravinda; and Sunītha, Mitrabāhu and others by Nāgnajiti.

A female companion of Usha, daughter of the Asura Bāṇa, named Chitrarēkha flew to the bedroom of Aniruddha (*Kṛshṇa's grandson, son of Pradyumna*), abducted him while he was asleep and brought him to Usha's Antahpura*. Aniruddha woke up and saw Usha. They fell madly in love with each other and indulged in passionate love-making. Aniruddha stayed in Usha's palace. Usha

became pregnant. Learning that an intruder was in his daughter's palace, Bāṇa had Aniruddha arrested. Pradyumna, who had his people searching for his missing son, learned from Sage Nārada of Aniruddha's predicament. Lord Kṛshṇa, with his army, attacked Bāṇa. Lord Ṣiva, saying Bāṇa was a great devotee of His, stopped Kṛshṇa from killing the Asura. Bāṇa released Aniruddha from prison and performed his daughter's marriage with him.

Once, Durvāsa went to Kṛshṇa's residence with the intention of testing Him. He started harassing Him, alternately asking for food and refusing to eat it and alternating between showing a pleasant and unpleasant look on his face. He asked Kṛshṇa to cover his body with rice pudding. He then covered Rukmiṇi's body with the rice pudding he had made Kṛshṇa put on his body. Kṛshṇa remained silent and calm no matter what Durvāsa was doing. Then Durvāsa tied Rukmiṇi to a chariot (*in place of a horse*). Even then, Kṛshṇa continued to obey Durvāsa without complaining. Durvāsa then gave Kṛshṇa some praise but complaining that Kṛshṇa covered most of his body with rice pudding but missed the underside of his feet, gave Him a Ṣāpa that those would be the parts of Kṛshṇa's body that would put Him at risk of His life (*The point of this story, probably, is not so much the actual details, but the fact that the spiritual power of Sages' Tapas was so great that even a self-aware incarnation of Lord Vishṇu had to abide by it. An additional aspect of this event is that Vishṇu needed an 'out' from the Kṛshṇa Avatāra*).

Once, Sages including Kaṇva and Nārada visited Dwāraka when some Yādava (*cowherd*) boys, wanting to play a practical trick on them, disguised Sāmba as a pregnant woman and asked the Sages

"Sirs, will a daughter or son be born to this woman?" With their Divya Dṛshṭi*, they realized that the boys were playing a silly prank. They said "A pestle which will cause the destruction of the Yādava dynasty will be born to her." As predicted, a pestle emerged from Sāmba's stomach. The Yādavas informed Kṛshṇa of this event. Saddened by the prank played by the Yādava boys, Kṛshṇa had the pestle broken into small pieces and thrown into the ocean. A few days later, the Yādavas went to the ocean shore, got drunk and with angry words to each other, fought using the pieces of the pestle and all died in the drunken brawl. After the destruction of the Yādava dynasty, Balarāma left Dwāraka and went to Tapōvana*. On hearing of Balarāma's departure, Kṛshṇa also went to the forest to perform Tapas. He was lying down in the forest when a hunter mistook His foot for an animal and shot an arrow at it. Kṛshṇa ended His incarnation, in line with Sage Durvāsa's Ṣāpa (*This manner of ending Kṛshṇa Avatāra was due to the fact that during His incarnation as Rāma, He killed Vāli who had not harmed Him in any way, in an unethical manner. The hunter who was the proximate cause of Kṛshṇa's demise was, in fact, Vāli's son Angada in a previous life*)

(*Stories of Kṛshṇa are spread throughout the Purāṇas; the main sources are the Mahā Bhārata and Bhāgavata. These two are cited as the sources without ascribing a source to each individual episode or event included here.*) *Mahā Bhārata; Bhagavata*

Kṛshṇa II – Wife of Parāvasu. Daughter-in-law of Sage Raibhya. One of Raibhya's disciples, Avakrīta, expressed his lust for her. Afraid that he might give her a Ṣāpa* if she refused, she told him

she would fulfill his desire and informed Raibhya of the indecent proposal. Raibhya had Avakrīta killed. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kṛshṇa III – Better known as Draupadi, Kṛshṇa (*Sanskrit for 'black' or 'dark'*) was the name given by Ākāṣavāṇi* to King Drupada's daughter. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kṛshṇa IV – A Muni. Disciple of a Muni named Ghōra. He learnt the procedure for a Yāga named Purusha from his Guru. *Chāndōgya Upanishad*

Kṛshṇa V – A king of the Andhra dynasty. Younger brother of Vṛshala. He ruled after his brother. His son was Ṣatakarṇa. *Bhāgavata*

Kṛshṇadwaipāyana – Brahmarshi (*the highest category of Munis*) from the beginning of time. Name of Sage Vyāsa. He was born to Satyavati (*in virgin birth*) and Sage Parāṣara when she was taking him by her boat across the Yamuna river. At the instant of his birth, he was full grown with tawny braided hair, Danḍa* and Kamanḍala*. He addressed his mother saying "O! Mother! Whenever you need anything, just 'think of me'* and I will come to you." He then went to the forest to perform Tapas.

Both the sons of Satyavati (*and King Ṣantanu*) having died young, she summoned Kṛshṇadwaipāyana (*by 'thinking of' him*) with a view to maintaining the family continuity by having him beget Kshētraja* children by her daughters-in-law Ambika and Ambālika. Dhṛtarāshṭra and Pānḍu were born to Ambika and Ambālika respectively by Kṛshṇadwaipāyana in this manner. Since then, Kṛshṇadwaipāyana followed their progress. He gave a boon to Gāndhāri that she would become pregnant. When she was

pregnant for a whole year without giving birth, she beat her stomach in frustration. A chunk of flesh emerged from her womb. Kṛshṇadwaipāyana had the chunk of flesh cut up into one hundred pieces and informed her that one hundred sons and one daughter will develop from the pieces of flesh and instructed her on how to protect the pieces until their development.

Whenever Dhṛtarāshṭra or the Pāṇḍavas needed help, Kṛshṇadwaipāyana would come to them and give advice. When King Drupada was hesitant to give his daughter to five brothers in marriage, he narrated the story of Panchēndras (*Sanskrit for 'five Indras'*) and explained that the five Pāṇḍavas were, in fact one. He counseled Dhṛtarāshṭra and advised him to convince Duryōdhana that it is in the best interests of all to make peace with the Pāṇḍavas. To help Dhṛtarāshṭra, he taught Sanjaya (*Dhṛtarāshṭra's constant companion and seeing-eye helper*) to listen in on secret conversations and gave him the ability to observe every part of the battlefield without being seen. When Dharmarāja was devastated by the death of Abhimanyu, Kṛshṇadwaipāyana consoled him by providing historical perspective. He came to Dharmarāja often and instructed him on the righteous policies for a king and the moral basis for action. When, after the end of the war, Gāndhāri and Dhṛtarāshṭra were mourning the war dead, he used his Divya Ṣakti (*divine spiritual power*) to show them the dead relatives and friends and consoled the royal couple. He also approved their request to retreat to Tapōvana*. When Dharmarāja was crowned, Kṛshṇadwaipāyana had him perform the Rājasūya Yāga*. At the conclusion of the Yāga, as Dharmarāja donated the entire kingdom to him, he sold it back to Dharmarāja and used the proceeds to

support the Brahmins in the land.

In the beginning, the Vēdas were all mixed up together. Under his supervision, his disciples Pyla, Vaiṣampāyana, Sumanta, and Jaimini divided them into four separate Vēdas and codified them into rules for behaviour. He sent his disciple Vaiṣampāyana to King Janamējaya (*grandson of Abhimanyu, son of Parīkshit*) to narrate his composition, the Mahā Bhārata. He acquired the name Vēda Vyāsa because he was instrumental in describing, differentiating and dividing the Vēdas.

Once, while he was lighting the sacred fire by rubbing two sticks together, the Apsara* Ūrvaṣi came there. Afraid that the Muni might give her a Ṣāpa*, Ūrvaṣi assumed the form of a parrot. Vyāsa looked at the parrot. Ṣuka was then born as Vyāsa's son. He taught Ṣuka Dharma Vidya (*the nature of the Supreme Being*) *Mahā Bhārata*

Kṛtadyuti – First wife of King Chitrakētu. She was childless for a long time. Chitrakētu performed a Putra Kāmēshṭi Yāga* and gave the Yāga Phala to Kṛtadyuti. A son was born to her as a result. The birth of her son especially endeared her to the king. The king's other wives, out of jealousy, poisoned and killed her son. *Bhāgavata*

Kṛtāṣva – Son of Barhiṇāṣva. Grandfather of Yuvanāṣva. *Dēvī Bhāgavata*

Kṛtavarma – Son of Hṛdika. Dēvamīḍha was his brother. He was the king of the country of Bhōja. He was an ally of Duryōdhana, the eldest of the Kaurava princes. He fought in the Mahā Bhārata war on the Kaurava side. However, his participation seems to have

been limited to joining with the other warriors in the ambush of Abhimanyu. It did not include fighting one-on-one with any Pāṇḍava warrior. Towards the end of the war, when Duryōdhana hid in a lake after his army was destroyed and his brothers killed, he went to see Duryōdhana and consoled him. He was one of the people in whom Aṣvatthāma confided his intention of killing the Pāṇḍavas' offspring while they slept. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kṛtavīrya – Father of King Kārtavīryārjuna (*who killed Sage Jamadagni, which led to several genocidal attacks by Jamadagni's son Paraṣurāma, the sixth incarnation of Lord Vishṇu, on Kshatriyas, the princely caste*). His daughter Bhānumati married King Ahamyāti. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kṛtāyu – Son of Arishṭanēmi. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Kṛti I – A disciple of Hiraṇyanābha from whom he learnt the Yōga way to overcome grief. He lived in the East region. He composed Samhitas* of Sāma Vēda hymns. *Vishṇu Purāṇa*

Kṛti II – Son of Sage Chyavana. *Bhāgavata*

Kṛtsnamada – Son of Suhōtra and father of Ṣunaka. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kṛttivāsēṣwara – A Linga* of Lord Ṣiva in Kāṣi*. An Asura*, taking the form of an elephant, was harassing devotees arriving at Kāṣi. Ṣiva killed him and wore his Kṛtti (*hide*) as a fur. He got this name as a result. *Linga Purāṇa*

Kshatrabandhu – A king. Once, he saw an untouchable man running away in fear of a grain of sand from a Brahmin locality that was airborne. He asked the man "Why are you running

scared?" The man replied "I was a Brahmin in a previous life. Once, I felt like eating the food I received from Bhiksha* while strolling along the banks of a river. Some airborne dust from a Brahmin locality fell into my food. The dust entered my stomach along with the food. Because of that sin, I was born as an untouchable. Taking even the dust from a Brahmin's foot causes such a fate. Last night a Brahmin appeared in my dream and told me that a conversation with Kshatrabandhu will make my sorrow go away." So saying, the man breathed his last. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kshatravṛddha I – Son of Purūrava. Younger brother of Nahusha. *Bhāgavata*

Kshatravṛddha II – Suhōtra and Kuṣa were his sons. *Bhāgavata*

Kshatrōpēta – Younger brother of Akrūra. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kshēmadarṣi – A king. He ruled the country of Kōsala. Once, a Muni named Kālakavṛkshīya, who was a friend of his father, brought a crow in a cage and told him "This crow is a Trikālavēdi (*knows the past, present and future*). It can identify any thieves in your kingdom that you are unable to catch." Some soldiers in the king's service, afraid that their guilty secrets would be revealed, killed the crow. The Muni said to the king "This is absolute proof that there are thieves among your officials. Create suspicion about each other among these thieves and punish each of them. I brought a crow (*which actually did not have the power the Muni cited*) just to prove that you had thieves among your employees." He gave the names of the corrupt officials. The king punished the identified guilty officials and appointed the Muni as his Minister. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kshēmadhanva – (*Also known as Kshēmadhanvi*) Son of Puṇḍarīka. His son was Dēvānīka. *Bhāgavata*

Kshēmadhūrti – King of the country of Kulūta. He fought in the Mahā Bhārata war on the side of the Kauravas. Bhīma killed him. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kshēmanarma – Son of King Kākavarṇa. His son Kshētragjna ruled the country after him. *Bhāgavata*

Kshēmavṛddhi – Commander of the army of King Sālva. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kshēmya – Son of Ugrāyudha (*a king who was killed by Bhīshma for insulting Bhīshma's step-mother Satyavati*). *Mahā Bhārata*

Kshīrasāgara – Lord Ṣiva created Kshīrasāgara (*the ocean of milk*) in response to the Tapas* of a Brahmin boy named Upamanyu, who desperately wanted milk. *Ṣiva Purāṇa*

Kshīrasāgaramathanam – Once, all the worlds were under the dominance of Asuras*. They drove the Dēvas out of Indra* Lōka (*Indra's abode, Swarga or heaven*) and were ruling it. The Dēvas, led by Lord Brahma, went to Lord Vishṇu and prayed to Him for protection. Vishṇu advised them "Do not rush into war but wait for your moment and build up your forces. In the meantime, become friendly with the Asuras and with their help, churn the Kshīrasāgara (*ocean of milk*). You will gain many valuable resources. " The Dēvas accordingly approached the Asuras and said "We are, after all, cousins. Why should we be enemies? Let us help each other." The Asuras agreed. The Dēvas, wishing to use the Mandara mountain as the churning rod, prayed to the mountain

(*in the Purāṇas, mountains are anthropomorphed into men*), but had great difficulty bringing the mountain to the ocean. Then Vishṇu Himself directed the mountain to assist the Dēvas. Mandara followed Garutmanta* to the Kshīrasāgara. The Dēvas also prayed to Vāsuki (*an articulate serpent*) to be the churning rope. The Asuras joined the Dēvas in the monumental task of churning the Kshīrasāgara. The Asuras insisted on holding the head of Vāsuki, leaving the tail to the Devas. A short time after the churning started, the mountain collapsed and fell into the ocean. The Dēvas prayed to Vishṇu. He took the form of a giant turtle, got under the mountain and held it up. The Dēvas cheered and the churning was resumed. Then Hālāhala (*a deadly poison*) arose from the ocean. The terrified Asuras and Dēvas ran to Lord Ṣiva and prayed for His help. Ṣiva swallowed the poison and kept it in His throat (*which turned His throat a bright blue. Ṣiva acquired the name Nīlakaṇṭha because of that*). As the churning continued, Goddess Lakshmi, Chandra (*the Moon God*), Kalpavṛksha (*a tree that had the power to grant any wish*), Airāvata (*an elephant that became Indra's transport*), Ucchaiṣrava (*a horse that Indra took as well*), and Dhanvantari holding a pot of Amṛtam* all emerged from the ocean.

The Asuras picked up the Amṛtam at first. Lord Vishṇu took the form of a beautiful female named Mōhini (*Sanskrit for 'enchantress'*) to distract the Asuras and ensure that only the Dēvas partook of it. *Bhāgavata*

Kshudhātīrtha – Once upon a time, a terrible famine occurred. Sage Kaṇva, suffering from starvation, could have gone to the Āṣram of Sage Gautama where there was plenty of food. Instead,

he went to the banks of the Gautami river, bathed in the river and prayed to her (*in the Purāṇas, rivers are anthropomorphed into women*). Gautami appeared to him and offered a boon. He asked that anyone who worships her should be free from Kshudha (*hunger*) and other worldly problems. The place where he prayed to Gautami river was Kshudhātīrtha. *Brahma Purāṇa*

Kshupa – A king. Once upon a time, as the world was in a state of anarchy, the people begged Brahma to give them a king who would have the power to protect Dharma (*the righteous way of life*). Brahma asked and got from each Dikpālaka* an aspect of himself and combined them into a king named Kshupa. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Kshuta I – Son born from Lord Brahma's stomach when He sneezed. He was the Ṛtvija* at the Yāga performed by Brahma. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kshuta II – Son of Prajāni, who was the son of the Manu* in the Kṛta Yuga (*first of four cyclical epochs; the other three are Trēta, Dwāpara and Kali, the present one*). His son was Ikshvāku. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kubēra – Eldest of Guhyakas. A girl was born from the left side of his torso. She was named Manōrama. She became Kubēra's wife. *Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa*

In a previous life, he was Guṇanidhi, the son of a Brahmin named Brahmadatta. He was evil, a thief, a womanizer and a generally cruel man. His father asked him to leave his house. Eventually, he could not obtain food. One day, he found Prasādam (*food offered to God*) of Lord Ṣiva that someone kept for later use, stole and ate it. Because he had eaten food consecrated by being

offered to Ṣiva, darkness enveloped him and prevented the soldiers looking for the thief from seeing him. When he died, the Dūtas (*the Sanskrit word Dūta has no true contemporary equivalent. The dictionary gives the meaning as 'messenger', but in this context, 'agent' may be more appropriate as they have the function of taking souls to the place earned by the dead person*) of both Yama (*God of Death who runs hell*) and Vishṇu (*who take souls of the dead to heaven*) came. Because he ate Ṣiva Prasādam, he was taken by Vishṇu's Dūtas.

In another prior life, Kubēra was born as Dama, son of King Arindama of Kaḷinga, and ruled the country after his father. He worshipped the Deities in many temples. He prayed to Viṣvēṣwara (*one of the names of Lord Ṣiva*) in Kāṣi*. Ṣiva and His Consort Pārvati appeared to him. Unable to see them because of their brilliance, he prayed for the ability to see Him. Ṣiva granted his wish. He first saw Pārvati and described Her beauty. Pārvati became angry and shattered one of Dama's eyes. Pārvati asked Ṣiva "Who is this man?" Ṣiva told Her "He is like your son. He is a devotee of ours. Be kind to him." She relented and restored his eye. Ṣiva gave him the city of Alaka (*in heaven*) and made him the Dikpālaka* of the North direction. *Ṣiva Purāṇa*

Son of Viṣravōbrahma. His mother was Ilabila. Rāvaṇa was his step-brother. He performed Tapas* directed towards his grandfather Lord Brahma. He received several boons from Brahma, including a son Nalakūbara, a world as his domain, position of God of Wealth, friendship with Lord Ṣiva, and the city of Lanka*.

Once, Kubēra was flying around in his flying vehicle Pushpaka.

Rāvaṇa's mother Kaikasi, overcome by jealousy at Kubēra's good fortune, told her son Rāvaṇa to take the vehicle away from Kubēra. Rāvaṇa, saying "Why that vehicle? I will acquire a better one", started performing intense Tapas. Rāvaṇa ended his Tapas and returned home. His friend Sumāli approached Rāvaṇa and said "We used to live in Lanka. The Dēvas drove us out of there and we have been forced to live in Rasātala (*a netherworld*). Your half-brother Kubēra now rules Lanka. Please somehow take Lanka from him." Rāvaṇa sent Sumāli's son Prahasta as an envoy to his brother with a message that he should hand Lanka over to him and leave. Kubēra informed his (*and Rāvaṇa's*) father of Rāvaṇa a's demand and following the father's advice, left Lanka. Kubēra requested his father for a suggestion on where he should live. His father suggested Kailāsa, Lord Ṣiva's abode. Kubēra went there and later Ṣiva created a city named Alaka for him. *Uttara Rāmāyaṇa*

Kubēra had sons named Nalakūbara and Maṇigrīva. *Bhāgavata*

Kubja – Maidservant of Kamsa (*evil uncle of Lord Kṛshṇa*). Kubja (*Sanskrit for 'hunchback'*) with a body twisted into three curved parts, was also known as Trivakra. She used to prepare perfumed lotions for Kamsa. Kṛshṇa and His friend Uddhava visited her home. Kṛshṇa touched her body. Her body immediately straightened out and she became beautiful. *Bhāgavata*

Kuchēla – A poor Brahmin. He was a friend of Lord Kṛshṇa. The two of them received their education from Sāndīpa. His wife was a chaste woman. They had many children. The family would sometimes starve for lack of food. Kuchēla never begged from anyone but subsisted on what was available. Once, his wife finally

persuaded him to visit Kṛshṇa and that He would probably help His friend. As a gift for the friend he was visiting after a long time, all he had was some dry fried rice that his wife packed in a piece of cloth. He was doubtful whether Kṛshṇa would even come out of his Antahpura* to see him. As soon as He was informed of Kuchēla's arrival, Kṛshṇa invited him and had him sit with Him on His bed. Kṛshṇa ate a fistful of the dry fried rice Kuchēla brought and relished it. As He was about to pick up another fistful of rice, His Consort Rukmiṇi gently stopped Him from eating it. (*The reason is that when Kṛshṇa, the ninth incarnation of Vishṇu, ate a fistful of the gift brought to Him, the gift-giver was automatically enriched. Rukmiṇi, the incarnation of Lakshmi, the Goddess of Wealth, was concerned that Kuchēla would become wealthier than was good for him and perhaps not remain as devoted to Kṛshṇa as he had been*.) Kṛshṇa hosted Kuchēla for a few days and bade him farewell. While he was with his friend, Kuchēla could not bring himself to ask for anything. Kṛshṇa also did not mention any intent to help. Kuchēla satisfied himself with the thought that Kṛshṇa probably did not give him money due to a concern that if he became wealthy, he might not remain a devotee. When he reached home, he saw a multi-story building in place of his hut and the house was filled with all the accoutrements of wealth, including servants, money, furnishings, foodgrains, and jewelry. He was happy that Kṛshṇa provided for him beyond any expectations. *Bhāgavata*

Kujabha – An Asura*. Brother of Jambhāsura. Indra* killed him. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Kukshi I – Daughter of Kardama Prajāpati* and wife of

Priyavrata. *Vishṇu Purāṇa*

Kukshi II – Daughter of Priyavrata. *Brahmānḍa Purāṇa*

Kulaṣēkhara – The king who built the city of Mathura (*where Lord Kṛshṇa killed His evil uncle Kamsa and lived until He built the city of Dwāraka*). His son was Malayadhwaja. *Skānda Purāṇa*

Kuḷindaka – King of the city of Chandanāvati. He was childless. One day, in the forest on a hunting trip, he saw a crying little boy whose finger had been severed. He took the boy home, named him Chandrahāsa and raised him. *Jaimini Bhārata*

Kumandāksha – Son of Kadruva. A Nāga*. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kumāraswāmi – Son of Lord Ṣiva. Once, Indra*, learning that Ṣiva and His Consort Pārvati were making love, feared that a son more powerful than himself would be born to them. He ordered Agni (*the God of Fire*) to somehow interrupt their romantic activity. Agni went and stood in front of the couple. Ṣiva, seeing Agni, stepped away from Pārvati. His semen fell to the ground. Pārvati, unaware of the reason Ṣiva stepped away, looked around and noticed Agni's presence. Sad and angry, She said to Agni "You know it is improper to go where a husband and wife are alone in intimacy, yet you intruded on us. This is unforgivable. Ṣiva's semen shall not go to waste; you bear it." Unhappy with Pārvati's command but realizing he cannot disobey Her, Agni became pregnant with Ṣiva's semen. Unable to bear his condition, one day he approached Ganga and pleaded with her "O! Ganga! I simply cannot bear this semen of Ṣiva. Since you are eligible to bear His child as well, please take this semen from me and save me." Ganga agreed and carried the semen. However, after some time, it became

too much for her as well. She dropped it in some grass. Receiving nourishment from the Sun's rays, a boy was born from the semen. As soon as he was born, the Asuras* experienced an unexplained loss of confidence. Six wives of Munis, named Kṛttikas, raised him. *Brahmānḍa Purāṇa*

When Sages perform Hōmas* at new moon, their wives assist them doing necessary chores. Agni would feel sexual desire for the women; in frustration, Agni went away to the forest, sad and dejected. Agni's wife Swāha, realizing this, took the form of Angirasa's wife Ṣiva and went to Agni. She said to him, "I am the wife of a Sage. I desire you, please have sex with me". Agni happily obliged. She put his semen in a golden pot on Ṣwēta (*white*) mountain. She returned to Agni several times, each time in the guise of a different Sage's wife, had sex and put the semen in golden pots. She did this disguised as the wife of six of the seven Sages (*except as Arundhati*). Kumāraswāmi (*also known as Shaṇmukha, Kārtikēya or Muruga*) was born from this mixture of semen. Kumāraswāmi was Shaṇmukha (*had six faces*). Finding the bow with which Ṣiva had killed Tripurāsura, he pulled the bow's string and made a noise. Frightened by the noise, two of the eight Diggajas (*great elephants each of which guards an eighth, or forty-five degree segment of the world*) fell on him. Kumāraswāmi, still a young boy, played with them, twirling them with his hands.

Lord Brahma greeted Kumāraswāmi and showing Ṣiva and Pārvati who were nearby, told him that they were his parents and that they entered the bodies of Agni and his wife using their Yōgabala (*spiritual power*) and created him for the good of the world. *Mahā Bhārata*

Indra then came and presented to Kumāraswāmi two bells that were ornaments on Airāvata (*Indra's elephant vehicle*). Kumāraswāmi kept one and gave the other to Viṣākha.

As soon as he was born, each of the six Kṛttikas, claiming that he is her son, came to give him their breast milk. He took on six faces to be able to drink breast milk from each of them. Ṣiva, Pārvati, and other Dēvas came to visit him and wondered who this playful and charming boy will approach first. Taking different forms, he went to each of them simultaneously. Surprised by his abilities, the Dēvas made him the commander of their army.

There was turmoil all over the worlds when Kumāraswāmi was born. A rumour that the trouble was being caused because the wives of Munis gave birth to him by Agni spread like wildfire. The Munis abandoned their wives on suspicion of adultery. The wives of the Munis came to Kumāraswāmi and begged him to protect them. Kumāraswāmi turned them into a star named Agnidaivatya. Swāhādēvi (*Agni's wife*) went to the Munis and cleared their suspicions, revealing the true events surrounding the birth of Kumāraswāmi.

Munis and Dēvas, fearful of the strength and power of the young Kumāraswāmi, ran to Indra and told him that Kumāraswāmi was coming to take his position from him and suggested that he should kill Kumāraswāmi before that happened. Indra summoned the Sapta Mātṛkas (*Sanskrit for 'seven mothers', Goddesses created with aspects of the Trimūrti and Dēvi to kill Asuras. Their names were Kāḷi, Kauṣika, Uddhata, Havishi, Ṣārika, Ārya, and Vaidhāti*) and instructed them to kill Kumāraswāmi. They went to him and were frightened by the power of his Tapas*. They sought

his protection and requested him to regard them as mothers. Kumāraswāmi made them into mini-planets. Indra, learning of this unexpected development, came to wage war on Kumāraswāmi. Indra deployed his signature weapon, the Vajrāyudha (*a thunderbolt, Indra's signature weapon, literally 'weapon of diamond'*). The weapon grazed Kumāraswāmi's right shoulder. A being with a Ram's head and gold-coloured body was born from the spot. That being was Viṣākha. Several young male and female beings also sprung up. Terrified by all these, Indra begged Kumāraswāmi for protection. Indra said to him "Others will try to create enmity between us. If you are angry with me, no one will protect me. So, take the position of Indra." Kumāraswāmi said he did not want it and on Indra's insistence took the position of commander of his army instead.

Once, an Asura named Ṣūrapadma waged war on Kumāraswāmi. Kumāraswāmi easily killed him. Indra praised him and gave his daughter Dēvasēna to him in marriage. *Skānda Purāṇa*

An Asura named Tāraka was terrorizing the worlds. Because of the strength and powers he had obtained from Lord Brahma by his Tapas, Indra and the Dēvas were terrified of the Asura. Brahma was unable to aid the Dēvas. Convinced that only the son of Ṣiva would be able to defeat him, the Dēvas, who had eagerly awaited his arrival, made him the commander of their army. They sent him and their army to wage war on Tāraka. A furious battle ensued. Kumāraswāmi killed Tāraka and the Asuras. *Ṣiva Purāṇa*

Once, Asuras including Mahisha and Andhaka were harassing the Dēvas and hiding inside a mountain named Krauncha. The

mountain became the Asuras' hideaway. So, Kumāraswāmi destroyed Krauncha and killed Mahisha. *Vāmana Purāṇa*

Kumāratīrtha – A Tīrtha* on the Ganga river. Once, Kumāraswāmi (*Lord Ṣiva's son*), driven by desire, was making love to Dēva females at will. Pārvati (*Consort of Ṣiva*), intending to teach him a lesson, assumed the form of one of them and went to him. Recognizing that it was Pārvati Herself who had come in disguise, and realizing that all women other than one's wife are like one's mother, Kumāraswāmi mended his ways, bathed in this Tīrtha and was cleansed of the blemish acquired by his womanizing. The Tīrtha came to be known as Kumāratīrtha as a result. *Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa*

Kumāravana – A Vana (*garden or forest*). Considering that it is a secret place and delighted by its charm, Lord Ṣiva and His Consort Pārvati were making love there. Pārvati was naked. At that time, some Munis came there. Angry that Her privacy was violated by men, Pārvati placed a spell on the forest that any male being will be turned into a female on entering the forest. King Sudyumna and his entourage were all turned into women when they entered this forest while on a hunting trip. *Bhāgavata*

Kumārika – Wife of Bhīma (*each of the Pānḍavas had at least one wife he did not share with his brothers, in addition to Draupadi, shared by all five*). Mother of Pratiṣravas. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kumbha – Son of Kumbhakarṇa. He was killed in the Rāmāyaṇa war by the Vānara* King Sugrīva. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Kumbhaka – A cowherd in the country of Vidēha. Sons of the

Asura* Kālanēmi were reborn as stud bulls in Kumbhaka's stable. No one could control the bulls which were harassing people and destroying crops. The king of Mithila ordered Kumbhaka to keep them under control. Unable to comply with the king's command, Kumbhaka announced that he would give his daughter Nīla in marriage to the man that could tame the bulls. Lord Kṛshṇa killed the bulls. Kumbhaka gave Him Nīla in marriage. (*Appears to be an alternate version of the story from Bhāgavata, of Nāgnajiti, one of the eight wives of Kṛshṇa. There is no mention of Nīla in the Bhāgavata, which is the standard Purāṇa of Lord Vishṇu's various incarnations*.) *Nīla Sucharitam*

Kumbhakarṇa – Son of Viṣravasu by Kaikasi. *Uttara Ramayana*

Son of Viṣravasu by Pushpōtkaṭa. Rāvaṇa's younger brother. As soon as he was born, he tried to swallow animals. Alarmed by his antics (*disproportionate to his age*), Indra shot arrows at him and then went to Brahma and explained his fear. After some time, Kumbhakarṇa accompanied Rāvaṇa when he started performing Tapas*. His Tapas, directed towards Brahma like Rāvaṇa's, was more intense than Rāvaṇa's. The Dēvas were frightened. They went to Brahma and said "We cannot withstand the effects of Kumbhakarṇa's Tapas. He already has the power to destroy the worlds. If he gains Tapōbala (*the spiritual power of Tapas*), can creation survive? Please use deceit to give him only small boons." Brahma agreed and summoning His Consort Sarasvati, he asked her to position Herself on Kumbhakarṇa's tongue and make him ask for six months' continuous sleep followed by one day of eating. Sarasvati did as Brahma suggested and Kumbhakarṇa ended up requesting the suggested boon. Brahma gave him the

boon. Later, Kumbhakarṇa was amazed and disappointed that he had asked for such an ineffective boon. Viṣravasu, when he heard of the boon Kumbhakarṇa asked for and received, went to Brahma and asked Him to modify them. Brahma reiterated that Kumbhakarṇa will sleep for six months, wake up and eat for a day and that on that day, he will be immensely powerful. Brahma also said that if Kumbhakarṇa is awakened during his six months long sleep, he will become weak.

Rāvaṇa built a special palace for Kumbhakarṇa's sleeping quarters. Kumbhakarṇa married Vajrajwāla, granddaughter of Emperor Bali. He had sons named Nikumbha and Kumbha. They were killed in the Rāmāyaṇa war. Kumbhakarṇa was asleep when Lord Rāma attacked Lanka*. After several commanders of Rāvaṇa's forces including Mahākāya were killed in the war, Rāvaṇa had Kumbhakarṇa awakened. Kumbhakarṇa woke up and said "Once, as I was returning from the Mēru mountain, I heard that Vishṇu will take an Avatāra (*incarnation*) to kill Asuras*. This Rāma might be Vishṇu's incarnation. Give up the fight." Rāvaṇa became angry on hearing this and said "If you have the courage to fight, join the battle. Otherwise, go back to sleep." Upset by his brother's response, Kumbhakarṇa joined the battle and was killed by Rāma and Lakshmaṇa. *Rāmāyaṇa; Mahā Bhārata*

Kumbhakarṇa, in a prior life, was Vijaya, one of the doorkeepers of Lord Vishṇu. *Bhāgavata*

Kumbhāṇḍa – Minister of the Asura* King Bāṇa. Chitralēkha, female companion of Usha (*wife of Aniruddha, grandson of Lord Krishna*) was his daughter. *Vishṇu Purāṇa*

Kumbhīnasa I – Daughter of Mālyavanta's daughter Anala.

Rāvaṇa's younger sister. An Asura* named Madhu abducted her while Rāvaṇa was away and married her. Rāvaṇa, learning of the abduction from his younger brother Vibhīshaṇa, went to kill Madhu. Kumbhīnasa stopped him and begged him not to kill Madhu because he was then her husband. Rāvaṇa gave up his intent to kill Madhu and struck up a friendship with him. Kumbhīnasa had a son named Lavaṇa. *Uttara Rāmāyaṇa*

Kumbhīnasa II – Wife of a Gandharva* named Angāraparṇa. When Arjuna was about to kill her husband, she begged Arjuna to let him live. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kumka – A (*articulate*) bird. Son of Pralōlupa. He happened to interrupt the Asura* Vidyudrūpa and his wife while they were making love and was killed by the demon. *Mārkaṇḍēya Purāṇa*

Kumuda I – Disciple of Sage Pathya. He was well-versed in Atharva Vēda. *Bhāgavata*

Kumuda II – A Nāga* king. A fifth generation descendant of Takshaka. He lived under the Sarayu River. Once, Lord Rāma's son Kuṣa, along with the womenfolk of his family, was bathing in the Sarayu river. While he was bathing, an ornament given to him by his father fell into the water. Kumuda's sister, Kumudvati, picked it up. Kuṣa, suspecting that Kumuda had stolen it, prepared to launch a weapon named Gāruḍa (*Garuḍa or Garutmanta, whose power is in the weapon, was a natural predator of the serpent species based on the enmity between his mother Vinata and his stepmother, the mother of serpents, Kadruva*) against Kumuda. Kumuda came to him and gave to Kuṣa not only the ornament he had lost but his sister Kumudvati in marriage as well.

Raghu Vamṣa

Kumudvati I – Sister of Kumuda, a Nāga* king. They lived under the Sarayu River. Once, she was playing with a ball, bouncing it off the floor. As she reached up to catch the ball, an ornament on the shoulder of Lord Rāma's son Kuṣa (*given to him by his father who had received it from Sage Agastya*), who was bathing in the Sarayu river at the time, fell into her hand. Kuṣa, suspecting that Kumuda had stolen it, prepared to launch a weapon named Gāruḍa (*Garuḍa or Garutmanta, whose power is in the weapon, was a natural predator of the serpent species based on the enmity between his mother Vinata and his stepmother, the mother of serpents, Kadruva*) against Kumuda. Kumuda came to him and gave to Kuṣa not only the ornament he had lost but his sister Kumudvati in marriage as well. Kuṣa and Kumudvati had a son named Atithi. Her son succeeded to his father's throne. Kumudvati immolated herself on Kuṣa's funeral pyre. *Raghu Vamṣa*

Kumudvati II – Wife of King Dāṣa of the country of Nishāda. *Skānda Purāṇa*

Kunḍadhāra – A companion of Dēvas. Once, when a Brahmin performed Tapas* wishing to acquire wealth, he came and asked the Brahmin what he wanted. When the Brahmin said he wanted wealth, Kunḍadhāra 'thought of'* Maṇibhadra, a soldier in the employ of Kubēra (*the God of Wealth*). When he came, Kunḍadhāra directed him to make the Brahmin wealthy. When Maṇibhadra asked the Brahmin how much wealth he considers sufficient, he replied "What is money for? Make me follow the righteous path. All manner of wealth will follow." With the

assistance of the Dēvas, Maṇibhadra made the Brahmin's mind focus on his Tapas. The Brahmin forswore the desire for wealth. He concentrated on his Tapas and acquired Tējas*. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kunḍala – Daughter of Vindhyavanta. Wife of Pushkaraṣāli. She had Kāmagamana (*the power to travel to any desired place*). After the death of her husband, she went on a pilgrimage. In one place, she happened to see an Asura* in the form of a boar being pursued by Kuvalayāṣva (see **Madālasa**), enter a tunnel, and followed them into the tunnel. In the tunnel, she found her friend Madālasa, daughter of a Gandharva* and told Kuvalayāṣva about her background. After Kuvalayāṣva killed the Asura, she performed the marriage of Madālasa and Kuvalayāṣva. She explained wifely duties to Madālasa and continued her pilgrimage. *Mārkanḍēya Purāṇa*

Kunḍina – The capital city of King Bhīshmaka (*father of Rukmiṇi, Consort of Lord Kṛshṇa*). *Bhāgavata*

Kunjara I – Son of Kadruva. A Nāga*. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kunjara II – A Vānara*. Father of Anjana. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Kunti – Wife of King Pānḍu. Mother of Dharmarāja, Bhīma and Arjuna. Sister of Vasudēva (*father of Lord Kṛshṇa*). She was the daughter of Ṣūra, a Yādava (*cowherd*) king. She was named Pṛtha. King Kuntibhōja, cousin of King Ṣūra, was childless and adopted and raised her. Because she was raised in Kuntibhōja's house, she came to be called Kunti. From an early age, she was accustomed to looking after the well-being of guests to the house. One day, Sage Durvāsa visited Kuntibhōja. Kunti took care of his needs and comforts. As a reward for her hospitable help, Durvāsa taught her

a Mantra. The power of the Mantra was that when she recited it while 'thinking of'* any God, that God will appear and fulfill any wish of hers. After the Sage taught her the Mantra and left, she wanted to test its power. She recited it, invoking Sūrya (*the Sun God*), wishing for a son like him. However, when Sūrya appeared, she was frightened. Being a virgin, she really did not want a son right then. She only wanted to put the Mantra to a test. Sūrya, however, would not leave after being summoned by the Mantra. He gave her a son and assured her that her virginity was not blemished. Karṇa was born to her. She put the baby in a basket and left it in the river to avoid discovery of her unwed motherhood and continued her normal routine (see **Karṇa**).

Kunti married King Pāṇḍu. Pāṇḍu had received a Ṣāpa* from Sage Kindama (*that he will die if he makes love to his wife*) before he and Kunti had children. Since he could not have conjugal relations, he left the city (*Hastināpura*) and went to the forest to perform Tapas*. Kunti and his second wife Mādri accompanied him to the forest. In order to perpetuate his lineage, he suggested to Kunti that she should have Kshētraja* children. She informed him of the Mantra that Sage Durvāsa had taught her. With Pāṇḍu's consent, she invoked Yama (*the God of Justice*), Vāyu (*the God of Wind*) and Indra* and had Dharmarāja, Bhīma and Arjuna respectively, by them. She invoked the Aṣvins (*twin physicians to the Dēvas*) on behalf of Mādri. Mādri gave birth to the twins Nakula and Sahadēva by the Aṣvins.

In a moment of weakness, Pāṇḍu attempted to make love to Mādri and died from the Ṣāpa. Kunti wanted to immolate herself on his funeral pyre along with Mādri but decided to live in order to

take care of the children. She treated Nakula and Sahadēva the same as her own sons. She went back to her brother-in-law Dhṛtarāshṭra's house with all five children in tow. For some time, Dharmarāja and his brothers (*Pānḍavas*) lived together with Duryōdhana and his brothers (*Kauravas*) but then Dhṛtarāshṭra told the Pānḍavas to go to Kāṣi*. Kunti started on the journey accompanied by the Pānḍavas. On the way, they spent a day in the house of wax which Duryōdhana had built (*he had his agents set fire to it, too late as it happened*) and escaped from it. While in the forest, she saw the female Asura* Hiḍimbi express her love for Bhīma and be rejected by him. She took pity on Hiḍimbi and directed her son to accept her as his wife (*each of the Pānḍavas had at least one other wife for himself alone, in addition to Draupadi, whom they all shared*).

Kunti and the Pānḍavas reached a town named Ēkachakrapura. There they were residing in the home of a Brahmin family. One day, the members of the family were wailing loudly in sorrow. On inquiry, the Pānḍavas found out that an Asura named Baka gets one human each day as his meal (*in return for not rampaging and killing more*) and that that day it was the turn of their host family to give up their boy to the Asura. Kunti wanted to help the family, considering that as a royal family, she and her sons cannot allow a Brahmin boy to be thus sacrificed. She had full confidence that her son Bhīma was strong enough to take on any Asura. She sent Bhīma in place of the Brahmin boy to the Asura. Justifying her faith in his strength, Bhīma killed the Asura and removed the hazard the town had been facing.

Kunti and the Pānḍavas then left Ēkachakrapura and still

disguised as Brahmins reached the city of King Drupada. Each day, Kunti would feed her (*and Mādri's*) sons what they brought as Bhiksha* and ate only what remained. Even if she felt sad that she, the widow of a king, had to subsist on charity, she never showed any signs of unhappiness. She was single-mindedly focused on ensuring a bright future for her strong sons of excellent character. She did not mind any hardship to achieve this goal. Arjuna attended the Swayamvara* for King Drupada's daughter Draupadi and after all the princes and kings failed, succeeded in the test consisting of hitting a mechanical fish rotating on the ceiling, looking only at its reflection in a pool of water on the floor. He earned the right to marry Draupadi. But first, he and his brothers went to Kunti and said to her "Mother, we brought a fruit." Not realizing that the "fruit" was that of victory in a very difficult task and without looking at the "fruit", she directed them to share the fruit equally. They were shocked to hear her command. It was unheard of for five men to marry one woman. Remembering Sage Vyāsa's advice that they should always obey their mother, the five of them married Draupadi.

Later, King Dhṛtarāshṭra summoned the Pānḍavas to Hastināpura (*the capital of the Kaurava empire*). He gave them a part of the kingdom and built a new city called Indraprastha as their capital. Dharmarāja performed a Rājasūya Yāga*. The success and glory achieved by her sons filled Kunti's heart with happiness. However, the happiness was short-lived. Duryōdhana was extremely jealous of the success of the Pānḍavas. He was also angry with Draupadi for laughing at his misstep in the Pānḍavas' new palace, the Maya Sabha, an extraordinary palace built by Maya*. He was determined

to destroy the Pāṇḍavas and had the full support of his uncle Ṣakuni. They invited Dharmarāja to a game of dice. Dharmarāja gambled and lost everything, and according to the terms of the wager, went to exile in the forest with his brothers and Draupadi. Kunti did not accompany them this time. She stayed in Hastināpura, worrying about the wellbeing of her sons.

The Pāṇḍavas, after completing twelve years' Araṇyavāsa (*exile in the forest*) and one year Agjnātavāsa (*incognito*), tried to negotiate peace with Duryōdhana. Lord Kṛshṇa went to Hastināpura as their emissary and met Kunti while there. She learnt from Him that her sons were safe. Hoping to pull Karṇa away from the Kaurava side, she went to see him while he was bathing in the river, informed him that he is her son and asked him to join her other sons. He would not break his oath of loyalty to Duryōdhana nor ignore the rivalry between himself and Arjuna for supremacy in archery. He told her that either he or Arjuna will remain alive but it is impossible for them to coexist. He did promise her that if one of the Pāṇḍavas other than Arjuna is in his grasp, he would let him go unharmed. Kunti, realizing he would not budge in his sworn enmity towards Arjuna, took what he gave and left. Even though the Pāṇḍavas were victorious in the Mahā Bhārata war, Kunti did not enjoy her sons' success for long. She decided to join Gāndhāri and Dhṛtarāshṭra when they left for Vanavāsa (*living in the forest*), disregarding her sons' plea to stay. Sage Vyāsa visited them in the forest. Dhṛtarāshṭra expressed a desire to see those who died in the war, including his sons. Kunti wanted to see Karṇa after revealing that she was Karṇa's mother. Vyāsa asserted that giving birth to Karṇa before she was married was not a blemish on

her character. The Sage consoled Kunti, Gāndhāri and Dhṛtarāshṭra, took them to the banks of the Ganga river and with his spiritual power, showed them all their loved ones who had died in the war. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kuntibhōja – A Yādava king. Being childless, he adopted and raised the daughter of King Ṣūra, his cousin. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kūrma Avatāra – The Dēvas and Asuras joined forces to churn the ocean of milk using the Mandara mountain as the base and the Nāga* Vāsuki as the rope. After some time, the mountain sank to the bottom of the ocean. The Dēvas prayed to Lord Vishṇu to save the enterprise. He took the form of a Kūrma (*giant tortoise, Vishṇu's second incarnation*) and undergirded the mountain and lifted it back into position. *Bhāgavata*

Kuru – Son of Āgnīdhra and his wife Pūrvachitti. *Vishṇu Purāṇa*

Kurukshētra – The battlefield of the Mahā Bhārata war between the Kauravas and Pānḍavas. It was here that Paraṣurāma (*Lord Vishṇu's sixth incarnation*), after killing his Kshatriya (*kings and princes*) enemies, filled five lakes with their blood and used the blood to perform funeral oblations for his father (*who was killed by the kings*). The place came to be known as Ṣamantapanchaka. It became a holy site also because Munis performed a Sattra Yāga there.

It came to be known as Kurukshētra (*Kshētra is Sanskrit for 'field'*) due to the fact that a king named Kuru (*son of the Sun God Sūrya's daughter Tapati, progenitor of the Kaurava and Pānḍava dynasties*) plowed this field, hoping to make it so holy that everyone born there would attain Swarga (*heaven*). When Indra*

came to him and asked why he was plowing there, he told him the reason. Indra laughed derisively at this. Kuru continued to plow. Indra came several more times and made fun of Kuru's effort. When Kuru refused to give up, Indra praised his tenacity and gave him a boon that those who starve to death there or die in battle there will ascend to Swarga. Lord Vishṇu had performed Tapas* there. Sages such as Ṣāṇḍilya attained Mukti there. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kuṣa I – Second son Kshatravṛddha. His son was Prīti. Prīti's son was Sanjaya. *Bhāgavata*

Kuṣa II – Son of Ajaka, who was a grandson of Pūru. *Bhāgavata*

Kuṣa III – Son of Suhōtra. Brother of Kṛtsnamada. *Bhāgavata*

Kuṣa IV – A Muni. Vasu, Ādhūrtajana, Kuṣāmba, and Kuṣanābha were his sons. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Kuṣa and Lava – Twin sons of Lord Rāma. Even though the sons of a great king, they were born in a forest. On Rāma's orders, Lakshmaṇa had taken the pregnant Sīta to the forest and abandoned Her there. Sage Vālmīki took Her to his Āṣram and cared for Her. She gave birth to Kuṣa and Lava in the Āṣram. Vālmīki sanctified a blade of Kuṣa (*sacred grass, also called Darbha*) and a Lava (*small quantity*) of water by chanting Mantras and had the babies cleansed with them. He also named the one cleansed by the Kuṣa as Kuṣa and the one cleansed by Lava water as Lava. Vālmīki raised them and gave them a comprehensive education.

When Rāma performed the Aṣvamēdha Yāga*, Vālmīki attended along with the twin boys. At the Yāga, he had the boys sing the Rāmāyaṇa (*the boys did not know of their and their mother's*

relationship to Rāma, that is, they did not know their mother was the Sīta of whom they were singing). Seeing Kuṣa and Lava who had a strong resemblance to Sīta and having heard that twin sons were born to Her, Rāma guessed that they were His sons. Rāma, hearing the story sung by the boys, was saddened by His loss of Sīta. Vālmīki informed Him that Sīta had been his guest at his Āṣram and suggested that Rāma send for her. Sīta was brought home. Forced to prove Her purity and virtue again, She chose to go back to Her mother, the earth. Rāma was plunged into sadness again. Vālmīki comforted Him and advised Him to complete the Yāga.

Once, a Nāga* girl was playing with a ball, bouncing it off the floor. As she reached up to catch the ball, an ornament on the shoulder of Lord Rāma's son Kuṣa (*given to him by his father, who had received it from Sage Agastya*), who was bathing in the Sarayu river at the time, fell into her hand. Kuṣa, suspecting that Kumuda had stolen it, prepared to launch a weapon named Gāruḍa (*Garuḍa or Garutmanta, whose power is in the weapon, was a natural predator of the serpent species based on the enmity between his mother Vinata and his stepmother, the mother of serpents, Kadruva*) against Kumuda. Kumuda came to him and gave to Kuṣa not only the ornament he had lost but his sister Kumudvati in marriage as well. Kuṣa and Kumudvati had a son named Atithi. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Kuṣāmba – Son of Kuṣa (*different from Rāma's son*), who was the son of Ajaka, of the Pūru dynasty. His son was Gādhi. He built the city of Kauṣimbi. *Bhāgavata*

Kuṣāsva – Son of Sahadēva (*different from the youngest of the*

Pānḍavas) of the Ikshvāku dynasty. King of the country of Viṣāla. His son was Sōmadatta. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Kuṣadhwaja I – Younger brother of King Janaka (*father of Sīta*). Son of Hrasvarōma. Janaka killed Sudhanva (*king of the country of Sānkāṣya, who demanded the hand of Sīta in marriage*) and gave his kingdom to Kuṣadhwaja. He had a daughter, Ūrmiḷa, who became the wife of Lakshmaṇa (*Lord Rāma's younger brother*). *Rāmāyaṇa*

Kuṣadhwaja II – Son of Hamsadhwaja. Dharmadhwaja was his brother. Kuṣadhwaja's wife was Mālāvati and Vēdavati (*Sīta's prior incarnation*) was his daughter. *Uttara Rāmāyaṇa; Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa*

Kuṣanābha – Son of Kuṣika. He became king of a country named Mahōdaya. Kuṣanābha had one hundred daughters by the Apsara* Ghṛtāchi. Once, while the daughters were strolling in a garden, Vāyu (*the God of Wind*) saw them, instantly fell in love with them and asked them to marry him. They rebuffed him, saying they will marry whomever their father chooses as their husbands. Kuṣanābha gave them all in marriage to Brahmadatta. While he was taking his daughters to their husband, he saw his father who advised him to perform a Yāga and that a son Gādhi would be born to him as a result. Kuṣanābha did as suggested and Gādhi (*father of Sage Viṣvāmitra*) was born to him. *Rāmāyaṇa*

Kuṣasthali I – Also known as Kuṣāvati. The city built by Rāma's son Kuṣa. Lord Kṛshṇa lived there for some time after Jarāsandha burnt down Mathura. *Uttara Rāmāyaṇa*

After Rāma ended His incarnation, the city of Ayōdhya appeared

to Kuṣa in the form of a Goddess and told him that the city is in ruins and begged him to come and revive it. He then returned to Ayōdhya. He was a preeminent economic expert. He assisted Indra* in his war against the Asura* Durjaya. He and Durjaya killed each other. *Raghu Vamṣa*

Kuṣasthali II – The city built by Raivata, son of Ānarta, in the middle of the sea. *Bhāgavata*

Kuṣika I – A king. Once, Sage Chyavana overheard the Dēvas who were talking among themselves say that (*his*) Bhṛgu family will be mixed with the Kuṣika (*a Kshatriya, or warrior*) family. Unhappy at the prospect of his lineage becoming contaminated, he decided to destroy the Kuṣika family to prevent the union. With this intent, he went to the home of Kuṣika. The king and his queen were very hospitable and asked him what they could do for him. He told them that both of them should serve him. They let the Muni settle in their palace and were attending to his needs. Chyavana lay down on the bed and asked that both of them should continually massage his feet and ordered them to not disturb him until he wakes up. Chyavana remained asleep for twenty one days. Forgoing sleep and meals, they kept massaging his feet. Chyavana woke up, got out of bed and without saying a word, left the palace and walked away. The king and queen followed him. After going for a while, Chyavana disappeared. They returned to the palace with sadness in their hearts but they found him sleeping on the bed and surprised, resumed massaging his feet. After another twenty one days, he woke up. They gave him a bath. He asked them to put him on a chariot and pull it themselves. They fastened ropes around their necks like harnesses and were pulling the chariot.

Chyavana was using a sharp stick to prod them. They were bleeding profusely, but continued to pull the chariot without complaint. Surprised by their patience and tolerance, he had them stop the chariot and touched them. They were instantly refreshed and became youthful. Praising their devotion, Chyavana told them that he will be meditating on the banks of the Ganga river and asking them to visit him the next day, left. King Kuṣika and his wife went to see him the next day. Using his spiritual power, he created the Nāga Lōka, complete with its magnificent palaces. When they entered his creation, it suddenly disappeared. They praised his Brahma-like power. Chyavana offered to give the king a boon. Kuṣika asked him why he slept for such a long time. He related what he heard the Dēvas say and confessed that he was hoping for an opportunity to give them a Ṣāpa*. Relating how his family and Kuṣika's lineage will be combined, he said the king's third son will be born with an aspect of Brahma. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kuṣika II – Son of Pallava, who was a grandson of Jahnu. He impressed Indra* and requested him for a son who would be a great man. His son was Gādhi. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kuṭhara – Son of Kadruva. A Nāga*. *Mahā Bhārata*

Kuvalayāpīḍa – Kamsa's elephant. When Kṛshṇa was going to visit Kamsa, the elephant's driver drove it directly at Kṛshṇa with intent to kill Him. Kṛshṇa killed both the elephant and its driver. *Bhāgavata*

Kuvalayāṣva I – Son of King Ṣatrujit. His given name was Ṛtadhwaja. He came to be known as Kuvalayāṣva when Sage Gālava gave him an Aṣva (*horse*) named Kuvalaya. He was a good

friend of the sons of the Nāga* King Aṣvataru. Once, while Sage Gālava was performing Tapas*, an Asura* was causing a disruption to the Tapas, assuming various forms by Asura magic. The Sage, concerned that he would have to expend some of his spiritual power obtained by Tapas in order to give the Asura a Ṣāpa*, was staring at the sky, wondering what to do. Just then, Ākāṣavāṇi* sent the horse Kuvalaya and advised the Sage to give it to the son of King Ṣatrujit. The Sage brought the horse to Ṛtadhwaja and requested him to kill the Asura that had been harassing him. Kuvalayāṣva mounted the horse and pursued the Asura. The Asura assumed the form of a wild boar and entered a tunnel in the ground. Kuvalayāṣva followed him into the tunnel. There he saw two beautiful women. He was amazed at finding them in the Asura's lair. One of the women introduced herself to him as Kunḍala, wife of Pushkaraṣāli and told him that the other woman, her friend Madālasa, was abducted by the Asura named Pātāḷakētu and held captive there. She requested him to rescue them and to marry Madālasa. Madālasa too fell in love with him. Kuvalayāṣva killed Pātāḷakētu, married Madālasa and returned with her to his city.

Tāḷakētu, brother of Pātāḷakētu, was angry with Kuvalayāṣva for killing his brother and wanted to avenge the death of his brother by deceit. One day, while Kuvalayāṣva was riding his horse around the city to ensure the security of the people, Tāḷakētu, disguised as a Muni, approached Kuvalayāṣva and requested him to donate the gold chain he wore around his neck to help defray the cost of a Yāga he planned to perform. Kuvalayāṣva believed him and complied with the request. The fake Muni then requested

Kuvalayāṣva to remain at his Āṣram (*outside the city*) while he bathes in the river. With the king sitting in the Āṣram, the Asura, using his dark magic, instantly reached the city and proclaimed that Kuvalayāṣva had died and showed the king's ornament as proof. Madālasa died instantly on hearing the 'news'. The whole city mourned the death of the king. Not long afterwards, Kuvalayāṣva returned to the city. The people were surprised and ecstatic to learn that Kuvalayāṣva was alive. They found out from Kuvalayāṣva about the trick played by the Asura. The king, though, was devastated by the death of Madālasa and lost all interest in affairs of state. Learning of this tragedy, Kuvalayāṣva's friends, the Nāga princes, informed their father. Saying there is nothing that cannot be achieved with determined effort, the Nāga king prayed to Sarasvati, mastered music by Her blessing and impressing Lord Ṣiva with his musical talent, obtained a boon that Madālasa will live again. Madālasa was then born as Aṣvataru's daughter. Aṣvataru invited Kuvalayāṣva and gave him Madālasa in marriage. Vikrānta, Subāhu, Ṣatrumardana, and Alarka were the sons of Kuvalayāṣva and Madālasa. *Mārkaṇḍēya Purāṇa*

Kuvalayāṣva II – Son of King Bṛhadaṣva. *Mahā Bhārata*

APPENDIX

Explanations of Frequently Used Terms (Where they occur in the text, marked with an * on first appearance within a story)

Ākāṣavāṇi (disembodied voice from the sky; an Oracle)

Amṛtam (literally non-death; the nectar that makes anyone who drinks it immortal)

Antahpura (innermost suites inside palaces)

Apsara (beautiful, talented divine nymph; a courtesan in Indra Sabha)

Asura (demons with magical powers including shape-shifting and invisibility; descendants of Diti, known also as Daityas and Rākshasas)

Aṣvamēdha Yāga (literally, horse sacrifice, in which a horse is let loose and the ruler of any kingdom the horse enters has to either fight the representatives of the performer of the Yāga or accept him as an overlord and pay tribute)

Brahma (Brahma is both a generic term for the Supreme Being as well as for the member of the Trinity, or Trimūrti, in charge of creation)

Budha (son of Chandra, the Moon God and Tāra, wife of Bṛhaspati; not to be confused with the Buddha)

Chakra (Sanskrit for ‘wheel’, a serrated disc that infallibly

completes the mission on which Vishṇu sends it and returns to Him)

Daṇḍaka (covers parts of Chattisghar, Odesha, and Andhra Pradesh states)

Dikpālakas (the rulers of the eight directions – North, Northeast, East, Southeast, South, Southwest, West, Northwest)

Divya Dṛshṭi or Yōga Dṛshṭi (Divine sight, knowledge of past, present and future)

Gandharva (semi-divine beings with special magical powers)

Gāndharva (without priest, parents or witnesses. The man says "I marry you", and it is up to him to remain true to his word)

Garutmanta (Garuḍa, a giant, articulate bird which is Lord Vishṇu's aerial transport)

Guru Dakshiṇa (tradition was that instead of a fee, the Guru would ask each of his "graduating" students for something that the pupil might be specially capable of doing)

Havya (fruit of Yāgas, food for the Dēvas)

Hōma (ritual sacrifice using holy fire)

Indra (the ruler of Heaven, is not an individual; it is a position which can be acquired by great Tapas or Yāgas)

Kamanḍala (a vessel with a spout used in religious ceremonies)

Kāṣi (present-day Benares; also known as Vāraṇāsi)

Kshētraja (when a couple, especially a king and queen, cannot have children, a practice of the husband directing the wife to be impregnated by another man, was allowed; such children, called Kshētraja, could inherit the wealth or throne of their mother's husband)

Lanka (considered to be today's Ṣrī Lanka, which used to be

Ceylon)

Linga (phallic symbol, the only form in which Lord Ṣiva is always worshipped)

Manu (each epoch is characterized by a different Manu, appointed by Lord Brahma to propagate the species and be the law-giver)

Maya (sculptor and architect to the Asuras)

Mukti (salvation, release from the cycle of birth and death)

Nāga (an articulate serpent species with their own subterranean world, Nāga Lōka; they have the ability to assume human form)

Namaskāra (respectful greeting with palms together in front of one's chest)

Pativrata (a devoted and virtuous wife; being a Pativrata bestowed special powers on otherwise unremarkable women)

Prajāpati (ruler or protector of people, created by Brahma to propagate the species)

Prāyōpavēṣam or Prāyōpavishṭa (abstaining from food and sitting awaiting death)

Puṇya (the proactive opposite of sin. It means not just avoiding sinful actions but actively doing good works, a unique concept in Hindu Dharma. Beneficial Karma)

Putra Kāmēshṭi Yāga (a sacrifice with the specific objective of begetting a son; a divine entity emerges from the sacred fire and presents a pot of rice pudding or sacred water, called the Yāga Phala to the performer, who gives it to his wife/wives; pregnancy occurs to whoever consumes it)

Rājasūya Yāga (performed by confident, powerful kings or emperors to establish a dominant status among rulers by defeating any that do not agree to be subservient and make them

pay homage and tribute)

Ṛtvija (priest who officiates at Yāgas, i.e., religious rituals involving animal sacrifice)

Samhita (the real continuous text of the Vēda as formed out of the Padas or separate words by proper phonetic changes)

Ṣāpa (generally translated into English as a curse; however a Ṣāpa is much more than a mere curse. A curse expresses a person's feelings or a wish that something bad would happen to another. A Ṣāpa makes bad things happen; it cannot be reversed or canceled. Release from its effects can be determined only by the person who gave the Ṣāpa)

Saptarshis (seven divine Sages who can be seen in the sky as celestial objects)

Ṣaraṇu (promise of absolute protection from danger from any quarter to the point of dying for the cause)

Sthala Purāṇa (the tale of a specific place, either a Temple or some other Pilgrimage site)

Ṣūdra (the fourth and lowest in the caste hierarchy; Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaiṣyas, in that order, are all higher. They were generally not educated and performed manual labor)

Swayamvara (a public meeting of invited kings and princes from among whom an unmarried girl chooses her husband-to-be; sometimes she has to accept the winner of a contest, e.g., Draupadi, Sīta)

Tapas (often translated into English as Meditation; however the old concept of Tapas is much more spiritual and powerful than the concept of meditation as understood today. One big difference was that it was usually continued until the Deity who was the

object of the Tapas appeared and granted a boon or boons)

Tapōvana (a forest that was safe and secure for the performance of Tapas)

Tējas (Sanskrit word with many meanings, including ‘heat’, ‘light’, ‘beauty’, ‘dignity’, ‘power’, ‘spirit’, ‘essence’; actual meaning is context-dependent)

Tīrtha (a place of holy pilgrimage)

Upanayanam (religious ceremony in which Brahmin boys are taught the Gāyatri Mantra [whispered in the boy’s ear by his father] and a sacred thread is placed around his chest; the boy becomes a Brahmin or Dwija, meaning ‘twice-born’)

Vānara (Sanskrit for ‘human with tail’; articulate monkey)

Viṣvakarma (architect and sculptor to the Dēvas, son of Lord Brahma)

Vrata (a sequence of worship to a specific deity performed with strict compliance to a set series of steps)

Vyūha (Sanskrit, meaning ‘Maze’. Vyūha is an intricate military formation designed to ambush and isolate a feared enemy from his supporting forces. It took specialized knowledge on the part of a warrior to enter and exit such formations, of which the Padma or lotus-shaped formation was a specially difficult one to breach. Arjuna was the only warrior on the Pāṇḍavas’ side who had the ability to enter as well as break out of the maze).

About the Author

One of the primary benefits of being raised in a household with a grandfather who was not only a professor of English Literature but a Sanskrit scholar as well was that the walls were decked with great works of literature. Making good use of this benefit, Surya Maruvada had read and loved the major books from which the stories in this book were extracted including the *Mahābhāra, Bhāgavata, Rāmāyaṇa and Dēvī Bhāgavata* in poetic versions during his teen years.

After emigrating to the USA and raising his children there, he wished there was something he could do because his children and their contemporaries could not enjoy the same access to these classic literary works that he had. Retiring from an engineering career at age 74, he found himself with a lot of time on his hands. With encouragement from his family, Surya set out to translate into English a book in Telugu titled Purva *Gāthā Lahari*, which had

been a useful reference for him for decades. This book is the end product of his effort, aided and abetted by his children and two nephews.

Surya lives in Maryland, USA with his wife and daughter.